

Discrepancies in MMO Landings data for Grey Mullet

The National Mullet Club, in their response to the Netting Permit Conditions Consultation, raised the point that the B&PSC questioned the validity of the landings data for grey mullet that the National Mullet Club (NMC) had provided in their pre-consultation response. The NMC quoted that that had received a reply from the MMO stating that the NMC had been supplied with and used the correct data and that the MMO pointed out that the B&PSC had used data that was provisional.

D&S IFCA Officers had put in a request to the MMO for the grey mullet data for all vessels operating in Devon ports from 2015 to August 2023. As the NMC had challenged the data, in January 2024, Officers asked the MMO to compare and check the two data sets i.e. the one that they had provided to the NMC, and the one supplied to D&S IFCA. In a telephone call to D&S IFCA on 30th January 2024, the MMO stated that the data that D&S IFCA had been provided with and analysed were the correct data for grey mullet landings, and the only provisional data were for 2023 as it is not a complete year. The MMO investigated the discrepancies between the two datasets and informed D&S IFCA, via e-mail on 7th February 2024, that there was an issue with the extraction code used on the dataset provided to the NMC which led to a duplication of landings.

The following charts show the differences in the data provided and the scale of the discrepancies between the two data sets. The data analysed by D&S IFCA show the decline in landings in particular after a peak in 2014 and further decline in 2016 with increased enforcement activity and the introduction of the Netting Permit Byelaw in 2018. For 2022 the landings data provided to the NMC show that 40 tonnes of grey mullet were landed compared to 5.92 tonnes for the data provided to D&S IFCA.

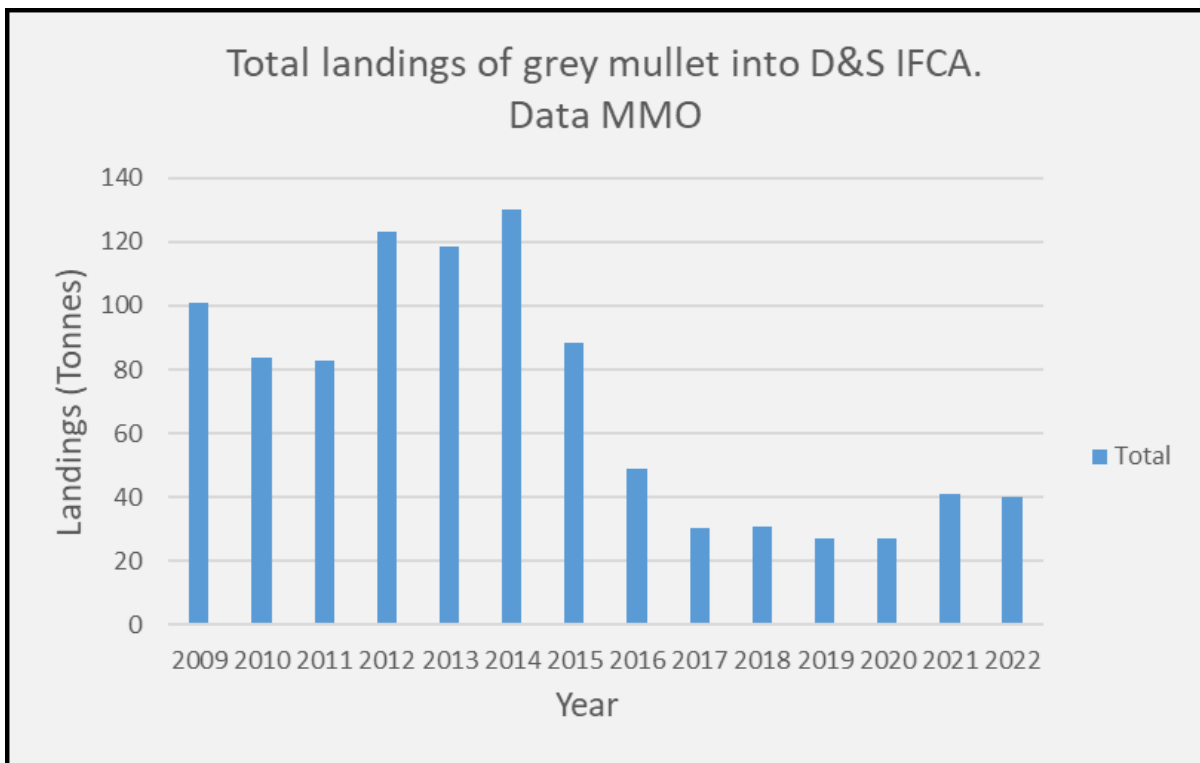


Figure 1 NMC Analysis of MMO Landings data

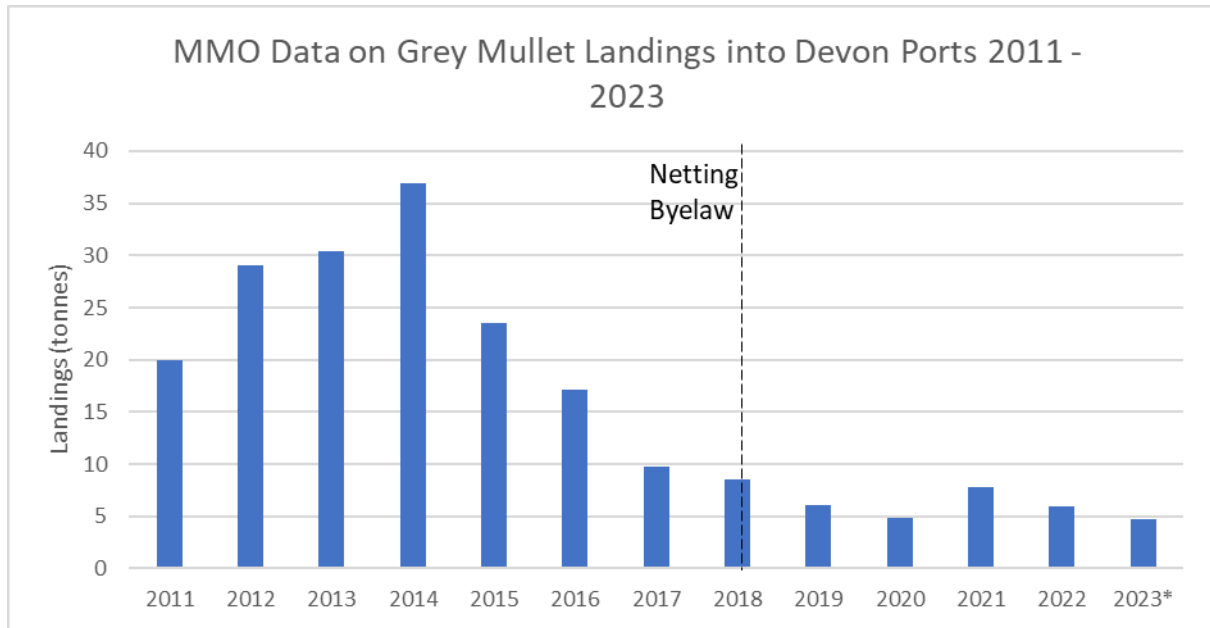


Figure 2 D&S IFCA's Analysis of MMO Landings Data