

Thick-lipped Grey Mullet

Chelon labrosus

Fish · Summer visitor to the estuary · May–Oct



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A streamlined, silver-grey fish with large scales, faint dark stripes along the flank, two well-separated dorsal fins and — the identifying feature — a notably thick upper lip bearing small bumps. Grey mullet come into the Solway estuary and the tidal Nith through the warmer months, often in shoals working the surface in shallow, muddy water.

BEHAVIOUR

Mullet are grazers rather than predators, scraping algae, diatoms and detritus from rocks, walls and mud, and taking in sediment which is ground down in a muscular gizzard-like stomach. They are famously wary and hard to catch. Shoals move into estuaries and harbours with the warming water from May and drop back to sea as temperatures fall in autumn.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Mulletts (Mugilidae)
SIZE	Commonly 30–50 cm
UK STATUS	Native; a seasonal estuary visitor

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