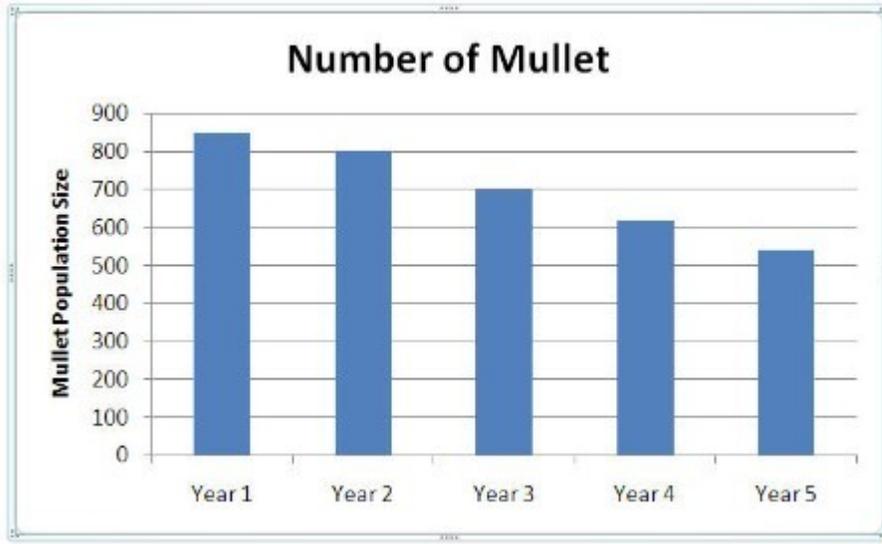


SC.912.L.17.5 – Population – Example 1 Answer

Mullet are local estuarine fish that move in schools and feed on plankton and plant matter. Natural predators of the mullet include spotted sea trout, sharks, pelicans and dolphins. The graph below shows how the number of mullet in an area has changed over time.



Based on the data, one student concludes that a new predator was introduced into the area during this time period. Which of the following is a likely alternate explanation for the change in the mullet population?

- A. mullet prey increased in the area
- B. mullet parasites decreased in the area
- C. the temperature of the area increased
- D. the amount of aquatic plants in the area decreased

Answer

- D. the amount of aquatic plants in the area decreased

If the amount of the major producer in an area is reduced, populations of consumers will also be reduced. Since the mullet feed on aquatic plants, their population would decline in response to declining numbers of plants.