Reviewer #1

I still have some concerns related with my previous comments which have not been satisfactorily addressed:

1) Abstract, line 22, add 'partially' before 'contributes'. Grazing is not the sole (I would argue it is not the primary) reason leading to the dominance of small phytoplankton in this region.

2) The abnormal nutrient data are still in Table 1 and 2. Please remove them or provide convincing arguments. If these data were finally published, it will lead to another region of HNLC!

3) The error estimates for μ and m are extremely important for estimating the errors of $\mu 0/\mu n$ and $m/\mu 0$. In general, the uncertainties associated with m are larger than with μ. With some of the large SEs of m given in Table 3, the magnitude of the uncertainties associated with m/μ can be expected. If not considering the uncertainty associated with each individual estimate of m/μ, the probability that we observe significant differences of m/μ between different size classes or between different seasons will be increased (i.e. we are increasing the Type I error). Statistical methods considering the uncertainty of individual measurements have existed for years (e.g. Hedges et al. 1999. The meta-analysis of response ratios in experimental ecology. Ecology 80: 1150-1156).

4) In the discussion part (Page 15, line 26), it can be argued that freshwater due to precipitation can contain plenty of nutrients and stimulate the growth of phytoplankton. Please consider this possibility.

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Reviewer #2

I really appreciate the author´s effort. The changes and corrections made by the authors
successfully addressed most of the comments expressed by the reviewers, improving the quality
of the manuscript. Nonetheless, I indicate some aspects, not very important, which could still be
improved.

1) I think that the correlation between μ and m deserves more attention in the discussion
section. Taking into account the higher phytoplankton growth rates obtained in summer
and the $\mu/\mu n$ ratios, the idea of the stimulation of phytoplankton growth in winter by the input of nutrients should be refined. In this way, Cáceres et al. (2013) suggested the
occurrence of a higher coupling between both rates in summer than in winter as a consequence of the lower nutrient concentration and phytoplankton biomass. Similar

reasons were exposed by Schmoker et al. (2013) when they made a comparison between ecosystems. On the other hand, some explanation for the difference between
both size fractions could be proposed.

Cáceres, C., Taboada, F. G., Höfer, J., & Anadón, R. (2013). Phytoplankton growth and
microzooplankton grazing in the subtropical northeast Atlantic. PloS one, 8(7), e69159.
Schmoker, C., Hernández-León, S., & Calbet, A. (2013). Microzooplankton grazing in the
oceans: impacts, data variability, knowledge gaps and future directions. Journal of plankton research, 35(4), 691-706.

2) The legend in Fig. 2 should be completed, indicating the meaning of the symbols (summer or winter), or removed. If the legend is completed the description of the symbols in the footnote would be unnecessary