

Giant Phantom Jellyfish

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

Recently, Scientists filmed the rare giant phantom jellyfish (*Stygiomedusa gigantea*) alive off Argentina, revealing new deep-sea biodiversity insights.

- **Scientific name** - ***Stygiomedusa gigantea***
- **Genus** - *Stygiomedusa*
- **Discovery** - Observed off the coast of Argentina 250 metres below the South Atlantic surface.
- First collected in 1899 and recognised as a distinct species 60 years later.
- **Habitat** - ***Midnight zone***, deep-sea layer up to 13,000 feet, living in extreme, low-food conditions.
- **Distribution** - South Atlantic off Argentina, including deep waters around Patagonia.
 - Rarely documented in other oceans globally.
- **Characteristics** - **Size** - One of the largest jellyfish species.
- **Bell** - Up to 3 feet (1 m) in diameter.
- **Arms** - Ribbon-like tendrils up to 30 feet (10 m) long.
- **Hunting** - Uses long ribbon-like arms to catch plankton and small fish.
- **Diet** - Feeds on plankton and small fish by reeling them into its mouth using long arms.
- **Behaviour** - Provides shelter to smaller fish in the deep sea.
- **Symbiotic interaction** - ***Maintains symbiotic relationships with fish species*** that feed on its parasites, such as *pelagic brotula* and *Centrolophus* species.
- **Uniqueness** - It is a rare deep-sea species rarely seen alive, and is elusive in nature.
- **Ecological Significance** - Highlights deep-sea biodiversity and underscores the importance of conserving extreme ocean ecosystems.



Reference

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