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

IE | Giant Phantom Jellyfish

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering