

International Whaling Commission (IWC-70)

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

Recently, India participated in the 70th meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC-70), held from 28 September-2 October 2026.

International Whaling Commission (IWC-70)

- **Held in** - Hobart, Australia.
- **Conservation** - India advocated for cetacean conservation by emphasizing the following priorities:
 - Science-based conservation,
 - Enhanced international cooperation, and
 - Implementation of practical measures to protect whales and other cetaceans.
- **Meeting coincides with** - 80th anniversary of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (1946).



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International Whaling Commission (IWC)



About IWC

- An intergovernmental body established to provide for the **proper conservation of whale stocks** and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry.
- It sets regulations for whaling, conducts scientific research and addresses threats to whales.
- It also works towards the long-term conservation of whale populations and their ecosystems.

	Established	1946
	Legal basis	International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling
	Convention signed	2 December 1946 , Washington D.C.
	Headquarters	Cambridge , United Kingdom
	Membership	89 governments
	Primary role	Management of whaling and conservation of whales
	India's membership	Since 1981
	IWC-70 venue	Hobart , Australia

 **Objectives**



Conservation of whale stocks



Regulation of whaling



Support scientific research



Ensure long-term protection of whales and their ecosystems

India's Principal Position

- India advocates for conservation efforts grounded in scientific research and evidence.
- The country supports expanding scientific knowledge in the following areas:
 - Population status
 - Distribution
 - Movement patterns
 - Breeding ecology
 - Threats to cetaceans
- India calls for enhanced cooperation among the following stakeholders:
 - Range countries
 - Scientific institutions
 - Governments
 - International organisations
 - Local communities

Cetaceans

- Cetaceans are marine mammals classified within the order Cetacea, which encompasses whales, dolphins, and porpoises.
- **Key Characteristics**
 - **Aquatic Life** - They live entirely in water and have smooth, nearly hairless bodies, front flippers, and horizontal tail flukes.
 - **Air Breathing** - Although fully aquatic, cetaceans possess lungs and must periodically surface to breathe air through a blowhole.
 - **Warm-blooded** - As mammals, cetaceans give birth to live young and provide nourishment through lactation.

Conservation of Cetaceans in India

- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** - Cetacean species inhabiting Indian waters are afforded the **highest level of legal protection**.
- **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** - Several MPAs have been established to safeguard marine biodiversity, including the following taxa:
 - Whales
 - Dolphins
 - Dugongs
 - Sharks
 - Rays
 - Turtles
 - Corals
- **Project Dolphin** - It was initiated by the **Government of India**.
- It adopts a **holistic approach** to the conservation of the following:
 - Dolphins
 - Whales
 - Porpoises
 - Associated aquatic ecosystems

Arabian Sea Humpback Whale has been identified as one of 25 species

prioritized for targeted conservation initiatives.

Reference

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