

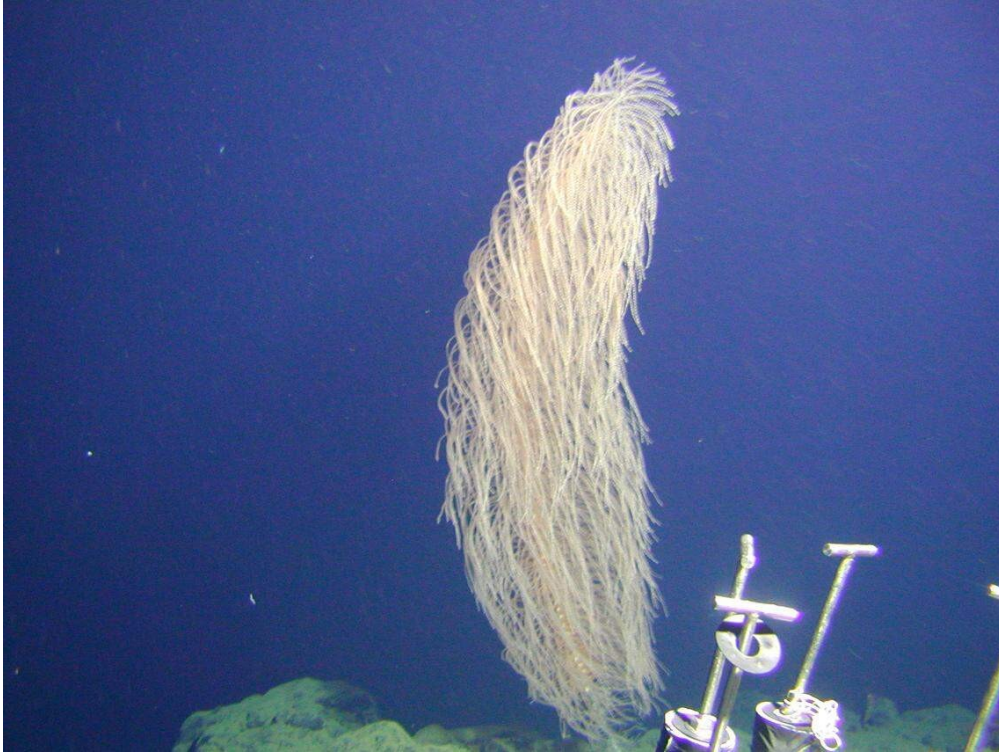
## Iridogorgia Chewbacca

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation*

### Why in news?

*Recently, the Scientists have discovered a unique deep-sea coral and given it a name inspired by Chewbacca from Star Wars.*

- It is a newly identified **deep-sea coral**.
- **Scientific name** - Iridogorgia Chewbacca.
- **Genus - Iridogorgia**, a group of deep-sea corals with long, spiralling structures.
  - There are currently **14 species of Iridogorgia with 12 species in the Pacific** (10 species were found in the tropical western Pacific, showing a high diversity).
- **Discovered location** - Tropical Western Pacific Ocean.
- **Nomenclature** - Named after the furry Star Wars character Chewbacca because of its hairy-looking branches.
- **First sight** - It was first seen in waters off Moloka'i in 2006 and later near the Mariana Trench in 2016 in Pacific Ocean.
- **Morphology** - The coral has become known for its **long, hairy, flexible branches** and shiny surface.
- The coral grew **upright** on the ocean floor like the tall figure of the character.
- **Size** - Height from 20 inches to about 4 feet.



- **Growth pattern** - Despite its large size and striking appearance, it usually ***occurs alone, scattered*** across deep-sea rocky bottoms.
- **Threats** - Climate change, pollution, overfishing and destructive fishing practices.
- **Significance** - This discovery adds to scientists' expanding understanding of the biodiversity hidden in the deep ocean.

## References

1. [Hindustan Times | Iridogorgia Chewbacca](#)
2. [Oceanographic Magazine | Iridogorgia Chewbacca](#)