Killer Whales

Why in News?

Australian authorities are euthanizing approximately 90 false killer whales that survived a mass stranding on a remote Tasmanian beach.

- It is a ***toothed whale*** and the ***largest member*** of the oceanic dolphin family.
- It is also known as Orcas.
- **Scientific Name -** Orcinus orca.
- **Type** – Mammals.
- **Weight** - Up to 6 tons.
- **Appearance** - They are immediately recognizable by their distinctive black-and-white coloring.
- **Distribution -** Though they often frequent cold, coastal waters, orcas can be found from the Polar Regions to the Equator.
- Orcas are highly intelligent and able to coordinate hunting tactics.
- These are extremely fast swimmers and have been recorded at speeds of ***up to 54kph.***
- Whales are ***highly social mammals*** and are well known for stranding in groups because they travel in large, close-knit communities which rely on constant communication.
- **Diet –** Carnivores.
- They use echolocation to communicate and hunt, making sounds that travel underwater until they encounter objects, then bounce back, revealing their location, size, and shape.
- **Conservation Status**
    - **IUCN -** Data Deficient.



References

1. BBC | Killer Whales
2. Times of India | Killer Whales



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