

Ambergris

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In news- The police and forest department recently arrested six men for smuggling two kgs of ambergris in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi.

About Ambergris-

- It is commonly known as **whale vomit**.
- It is an extremely expensive substance used in manufacturing perfume.
- It is a **waxy substance formed inside the stomach of sperm whales** which hunt and eat giant squids and colossal squids.
- It is **formed by the beaks of squid** that are partially digested by sperm whales and then released into the sea.
- This whale excretion is so valuable it is referred to as **floating gold**.
- As per the latest estimates, 1 kg of ambergris is worth Rs 1 crore in the international market.
- Ancient Egyptians used it as incense.
- It is also believed to be used in some traditional medicines.
- Since the sperm whale is a protected species, hunting of the whale is not allowed.
- However, smugglers are known to have illegally targeted the fish in order to obtain the valuable Ambergris from its stomach.