

# PRABHA IAS IPS COACHING ACADEMY



Scientists fear that the USA administration's plan to expand oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico will push Rice's Whales to extinction.

## **Rice's Whale**

Rice's whales are members of the baleen whale family Balaenopteridae.

These are most closely related to Bryde's whales.

In 2021, the Rice's whale was recognized as a new species, evolutionarily distinct from other Bryde's whales around the world.

## **Appearance**

They have three prominent ridges in front of their blowhole. Their body is sleek, and their pectoral fins are slender and pointed.

Rice's whales are uniformly dark gray on top with a pale to pink belly.

It is a medium-sized whale sighted year-round in the northern Gulf of America (Previously known as Gulf of Mexico), with most sightings concentrated in 100-400 meter (m) depths of the northeastern

**Distribution:** It is the only whale species that lives year-round in the Gulf of America.

**Diet:** They are mainly dependent on silver-rag driftfish.

**Reproduction:** Rice's whales are likely able to reproduce every 2 to 3 years, reaching sexual maturity at age nine.

**Threats:** Vessel strikes, noise pollution, oil spills, and climate change.

**IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered