

4. Great Barrier Reef

Prelims: Environment- Biodiversity

Mains: GS-III- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Why in News?

- ▶ Australian government downgrades outlook for the Great Barrier Reef to 'very poor'. Coral along large swathes of the 2,300-kilometre reef have been killed by rising sea temperatures linked to climate change, leaving behind skeletal remains in a process known as coral bleaching.

Implications of "Very Poor" Status:

- ▶ The report published by The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority-An Australian Agency will be a major input into UNESCO's Committee.
- ▶ There are high chances that Great barrier reef to be considered for "List of World Heritage in Danger"

World Heritage in Danger:

- ▶ The List of World Heritage in Danger is designed to inform the international community of conditions which threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- ▶ Dangers can be 'ascertained', referring to specific and proven imminent threats, or 'potential', when a property is faced with threats which could have negative effects on its World Heritage values.
- ▶ It encourages corrective action.

Great Barrier Reef:

- ▶ The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef system composed of over 2,900 individual reefs and 900 islands.
- ▶ The reef is located in the Coral Sea (North-East Coast), off the coast of Queensland, Australia. The Great Barrier Reef can be seen from outer space and is the world's biggest single structure made by living organisms.
- ▶ The reef structure is composed of and built by billions of tiny organisms, known as coral polyps. It was selected as a World Heritage Site in 1981.