



# IAS PARLIAMENT

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## Deep Sea Mining Operations

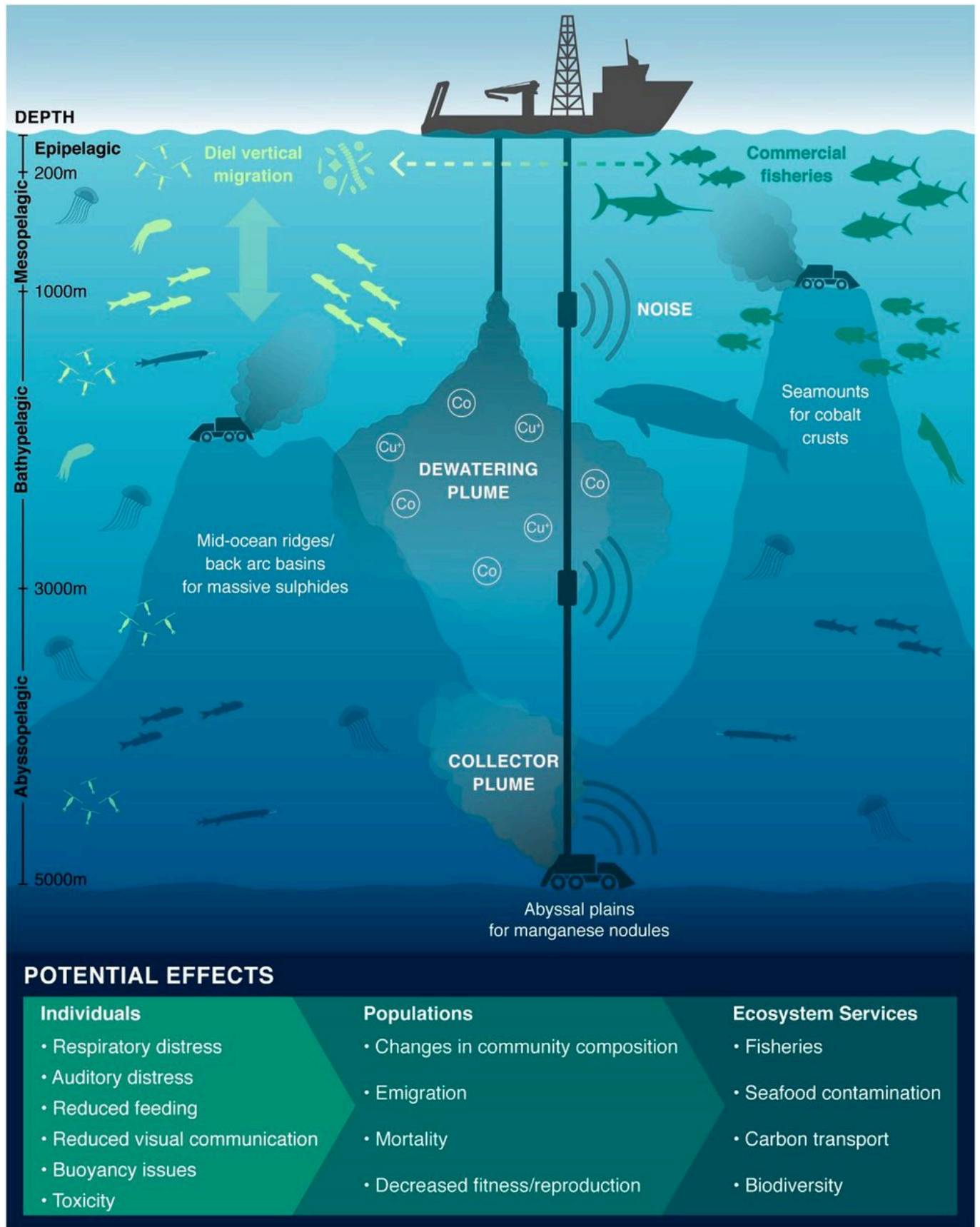
### Why in news?

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) has decided that it will start taking permit applications in July 2023 from companies that want to mine the ocean's floor.

### What is Deep sea mining?

*The deep sea ocean floor covers about two-thirds of the total seafloor.*

- Deep-sea mining is the process of retrieving mineral deposits from the deep seabed in the ocean below 200m.
- Deep-sea mining has metals crucial to making the transition to clean energy.
- Deep sea mining will be conducted to extract key battery materials such as cobalt, copper, nickel, and manganese from rocks called "**polymetallic nodules**".
- Research suggests that deep sea mining could destroy habitats and wipe out species.



## What is the issue?

- **Moratorium** - Several nationals called for a moratorium on industrial mining at the ISA's council meeting.
- **Destroy deep-sea habitats** -The digging and gauging of the ocean floor by machines

can alter or destroy deep-sea habitats.

- **Fine sediments** -Deep-sea mining will stir up fine sediments on the seafloor, creating plumes of suspended particles.
- **Biodiversity** - Whales, tuna and sharks could be affected by noise, vibrations and light pollution caused by deep sea mining.
- **Mining code** - In the absence of a mining code, the ISA's Governing council is uncertain about the process it should adopt for reviewing applications for mining contracts.

## Quick Facts

### International Seabed Authority

- **Establishment** - An autonomous international organization established in 1994 under
  - 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
  - 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1994 Agreement).
- **Headquarters** -Kingston, Jamaica
- **Members** -168 Members which includes 167 Member States and the European Union
- **Exclusive Economic Zones** -ISA holds authority over the ocean floors outside of its 168 member states' Exclusive Economic Zones
- **Protects marine environment** -ISA has the mandate to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed-related activities.
- **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** - ISA is the organization through which States Parties to UNCLOS organize and control all mineral-resources-related activities in the area for the benefit of humankind.

### United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- **Establishment** -Adopted in 1982
- **Function** - Lays down a *comprehensive law and order* in the world's oceans and seas establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources.
- Under UNCLOS, which *India ratified in 1995*, the sea and resources in the water and the seabed are classified into three zones:
  - **Internal waters (IW)** -It is on the landward side of the baseline which includes gulfs and small bays. Coastal states treat IW like land.
  - **Territorial sea (TS)** -It extends outwards to *12 nautical miles* from the baseline. The coastal nations enjoy sovereignty over air, sea, seabed and subsoil and all living and non-living resources therein.
  - **Exclusive economic zone (EEZ)** -This extends outwards to 200 nautical miles from the baseline.
- In EEZ, the coastal nations have sovereign rights for exploration, exploiting, conserving and managing all the natural resources therein.

- **The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS)** -Serves as the secretariat of the Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- **Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty** - An international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction within the framework of UNCLOS.

## References

1. [The Indian Express | Deep Sea Mining](#)
2. [IUCN | Deep Sea Mining Issues](#)
3. [ISA | About ISA](#)
4. [UNCLOS | About UNCLOS](#)



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