

Caspian Sea

The Caspian Sea is the world's largest inland body of water, variously classed as the world's largest lake or a full-fledged sea. An endorheic basin, it lies between Europe and Asia.

Latest News

- On July 1st, 2021, the Iranian Navy kicked off a military exercise in the Caspian Sea in the north of the country.
- The drill, called Sustainable Security 1400, covers an area of about 77,000 square km in Iran's territorial waters of the Caspian Sea.
- On July 5, 2021 a strong explosion took place in the Caspian Sea where Azerbaijan had most of its offshore oil rigs.
- Although it was not known what was the immediate cause of the explosion, preliminary investigations indicated that a mud volcano was the reason.

Caspian sea is featured in the geography segment of the UPSC Syllabus.

As such candidates preparing for the UPSC Exam will find this article useful.

Geographical Features of the Caspian Sea

In the below table, a quick synopsis of Geographical features of the Caspian Sea is given

Geographical Features of the Caspian Sea	
Max Length	1,030 km
Shore length	7,000 km
Primary Inflows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Volga River● Ural River● Kura River● Terek River
Average Depth	211 m
Countries Located Near its Basin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Armenia● Azerbaijan● Georgia● Iran● Kazakhstan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Russia ● Turkey ● Turkmenistan ● Uzbekistan
Water volume	78,200 km ³

- The Caspian Sea lies between Europe and Asia; east of the Caucasus, west of the broad steppe of Central Asia, south of the fertile plains of Southern Russia in Eastern Europe, and north of the mountainous Iranian Plateau of Western Asia.
- The Caspian Sea is the largest inland body of water in the world and accounts for 40 to 44% of the total lacustrine waters of the world.
- The Caspian Sea has numerous islands throughout, all of them near the coasts; none in the deeper parts of the sea. Ogurja Ada is the largest island.



Facts About the Caspian Sea

- The Caspian Sea is the world's largest inland water body covering about 371,000 square kilometres. With minimal outflow regions, the Sea has become the largest inland water body.
- The seabed is the 2nd lowest natural relief depression on Earth
- As an inland lake, the Caspian Sea is home to numerous species of indigenous marine flora and fauna. Most of these are protected species to prevent ecological damage.
- Some species unique to the Sea have been prefixed with the term "Caspian" to indicate their origin. This includes the Caspian tern, Caspian gull, Caspian turtle, and the aforementioned Caspian seal.
- The countries bordering the Caspian Sea are largely dependent on mineral resources, including oil and gas. This contributes to an estimated 10% of their GDP and around 40% of all exports.
- Most water bodies today have been classified into one of the broad groups- oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, streams, and pools (further classified into above the ground, underground, etc.). However, the Caspian Sea is unique as it has never been successfully classified.

Environmental Concerns of the Caspian Sea

The Volga River contributes to about 80% of the Caspian Sea's inflow. Since the lower reaches of Volga are home to many industrial centres, there is an unregulated release of chemical and biological pollutants. The United Nations Environment Programme warns that the Caspian Seas bears the brunt of many wastes which are primarily introduced into its basin by the Volga River

Several islands such as Vulf, have suffered ecological damage as a result of the extensive oil drilling in the region. A number of bird and marine species populations have been decimated as a result.

Frequently Asked Questions about Caspian Sea

What are the types of marine life found in the Caspian Sea?

Waters of the Caspian Sea house 400 endemic aquatic animal species, including the Caspian seal (*Phoca caspica*) and sturgeons (90% of the world's catch). The sea coast provides important sites for many nesting and migratory birds such as flamingoes, geese, ducks, gulls, terns, and swans.

Where does the Caspian Sea get its name from?

The Caspian Sea derives its name from the ancient tribe of Caspi that inhabited the southwest of the sea in Transcaucasia.