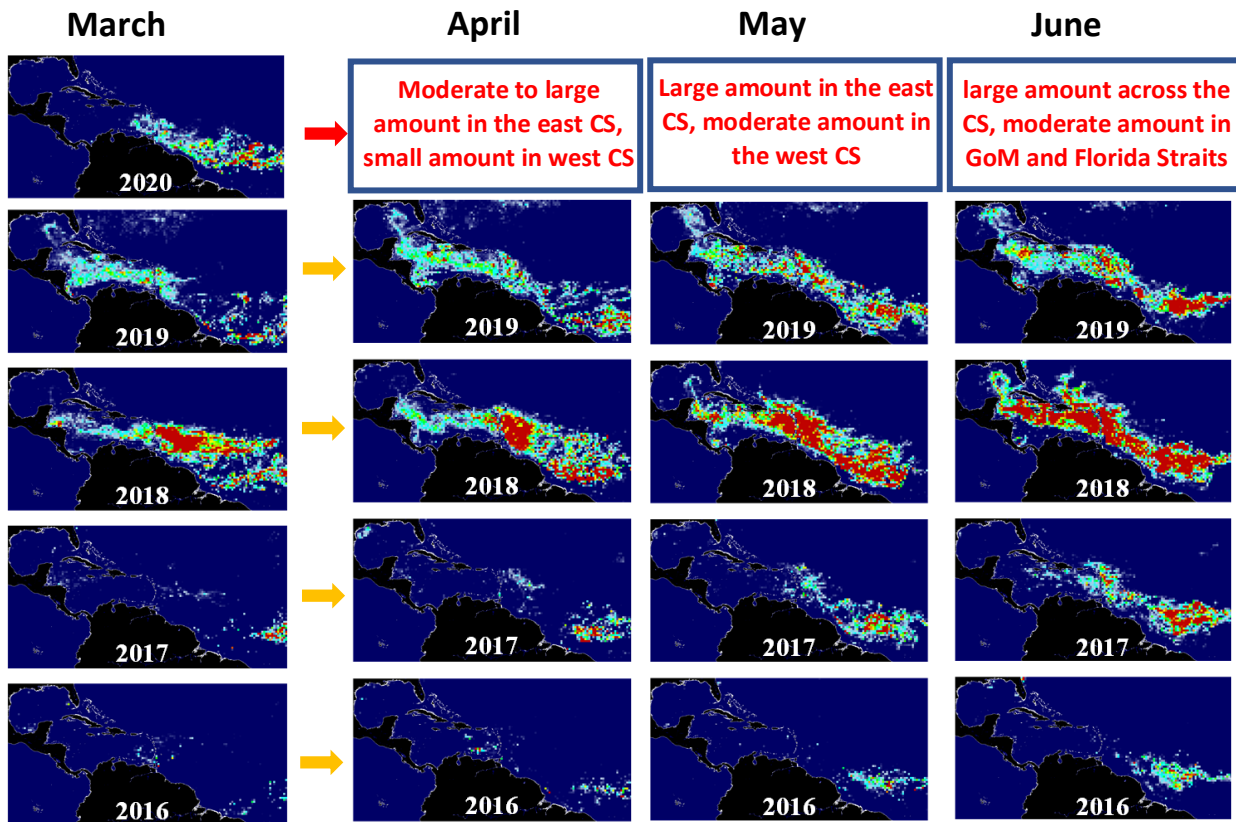


The maps below show *Sargassum* abundance, with warm colors representing high abundance.

**In March 2020, the *Sargassum* amount increased significantly across the central Atlantic.** Large amount of *Sargassum* was observed in the Central West Atlantic (CWA, i.e., the region east of the Lesser Antilles in the maps below) and the Central East Atlantic (CEA). Large amount also appeared in most of the eastern Caribbean (up to 67°W and 17°N). The lower Lesser Antilles Islands should have already experienced some minor to moderate beaching events. In other regions, *Sargassum* remained to be minimal, these include the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), Florida Straits, and western Caribbean. In all regions combined, the total *Sargassum* amount increased from 1.6M tons in February to ~ 4.3 million metric tons in March, similar to March 2015 (4.2M tons) and March 2019 (4.7M tons).

**This is alarming for the coming months.** Looking ahead, the eastern Caribbean will see large amounts of *Sargassum* in April to June 2020. The western Caribbean will also experience some small to moderate amounts. Some of the Lesser Antilles Islands will continue experience moderate to strong beaching events on both their windward leeward beaches. This situation may continue into summer, and the overall bloom intensity is likely to be similar as that in 2015 based on the current observations. We will keep a close eye on how *Sargassum* in the tropical Atlantic may evolve in the next two months.

More updates will be provided by the end of April 2020, and more information and near real-time imagery can be found under the *Sargassum* Watch System (SaWS, <https://optics.marine.usf.edu/projects/saws.html> )



Disclaimer: The information bulletin is meant to provide a general outlook of current bloom condition and future bloom probability for the Caribbean Sea. By no means should it be used for commercial purpose, or used for predicting bloom conditions for a specific location or beach. The authors of this bulletin, as well as USF and NASA, take no responsibility for improper use or interpretation of the bulletin.