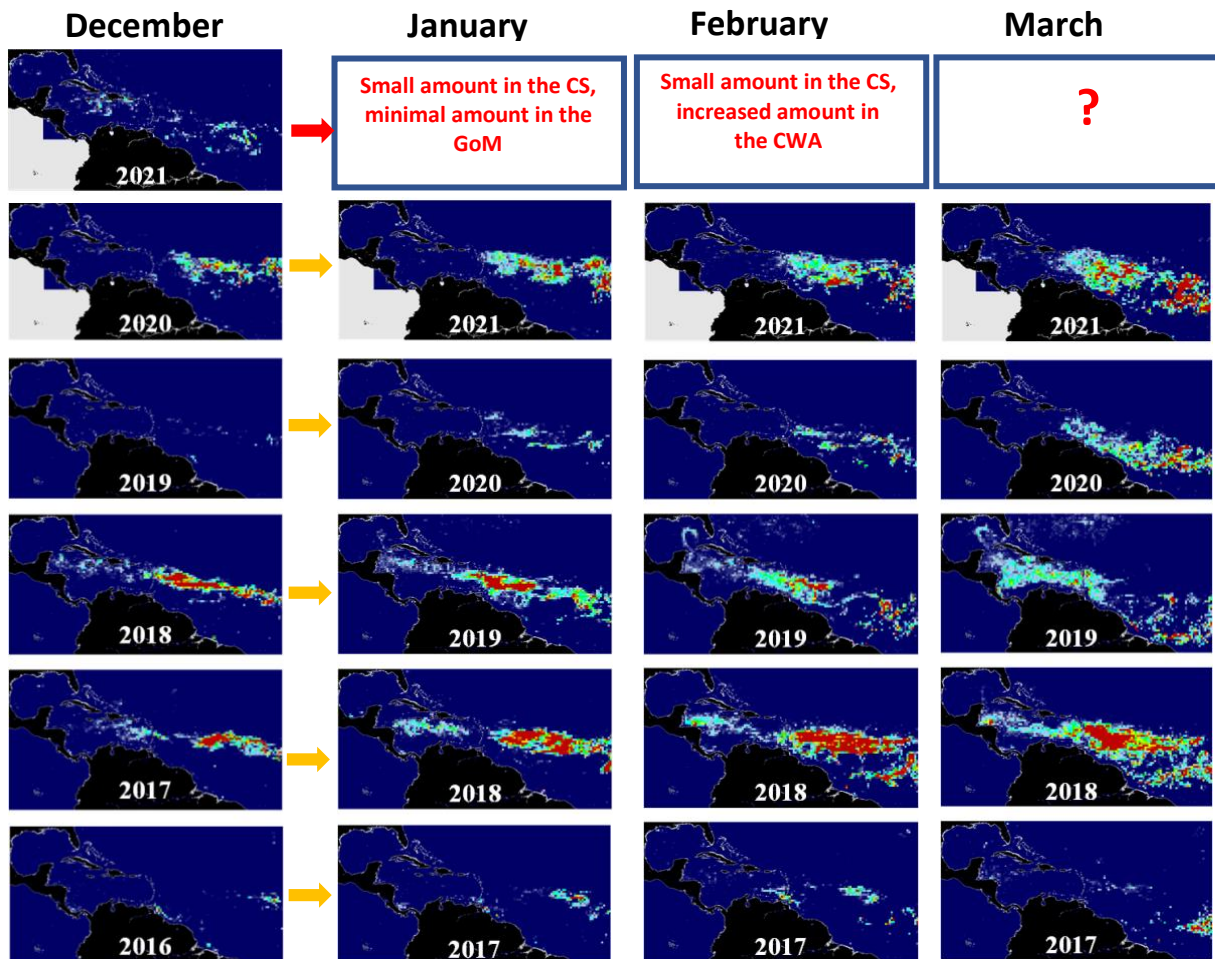




The maps below show *Sargassum* abundance, with warm colors representing high abundance. **In December 2021, the overall *Sargassum* amount remained stable from November across the Central Atlantic, the Caribbean Sea (CS) and the Gulf of Mexico (GoM).** Similar to last month, moderate amount was observed in the northeastern CS and the Central West Atlantic (CWA, i.e., the region east of the Lesser Antilles in the maps below). A very small amount of *Sargassum* was found in the GoM. Compared with the same month of the previous bloom years, the total amount (1.7 M tons) is much lower than in 2020 or 2017 (3.0 M tons) but much higher than in 2019 or 2016.

Looking ahead, the western CS, GoM, Florida Straits, and east coast of Florida will continue to be largely free of *Sargassum* in the coming months. According to the historical record of the recent years, *Sargassum* will likely aggregate in the Central Atlantic (CEA) and be transported westward in the following months, which may lead to increased *Sargassum* in the CWA and eastern CS. Because *Sargassum* amount stopped decreasing at a moderate level in December, 2022 might be a moderate *Sargassum* year. We will keep a close eye on how *Sargassum* in the CS and the tropical Atlantic may evolve in the next two months.

More updates will be provided by the end of January 2022, 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.