

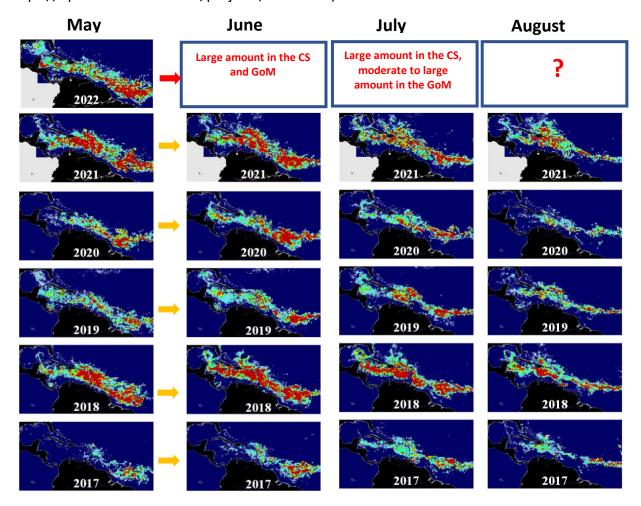
Outlook of 2022 Sargassum blooms in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico*



May 31st, 2022, by University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab (huc@usf.edu, szhang26@usf.edu)

The maps below show *Sargassum* abundance, with warm colors representing high abundance. **In May 2022**, the total *Sargassum* amount continued to increase across the tropical Atlantic, the Caribbean Sea (CS), the Central West Atlantic (CWA, i.e., the region east of the Lesser Antilles in the maps below) and the Gulf of Mexico (GoM), which sets a new historical record for the month of May. In all regions combined, the total *Sargassum* amount increased from ~14.0 million tons in April 2022 to ~18.8 million tons in May 2022, exceeding all previous major bloom years. Correspondingly, significant beaching events may have occurred around the Caribbean nations or islands. Furthermore, large amount of *Sargassum* was already found in the GoM since April (~1.4 million tons in May). Small amount was also found in the Florida Straits and along the east coast of Florida, indicating possible beaching events.

Looking ahead, Sargassum amount will likely continue to increase in June – July, but this trend may reverse in July – August based on the historical record. This means that the Sargassum amount in 2022 may reach its peak value in the next one or two months, possibly setting a new historical record. 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 June 2022, and more information and near realtime imagery be found under the Sargassum Watch System (SaWS, can 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.