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

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The maps below show *Sargassum* abundance, with warm colors representing higher values. The overall *Sargassum* quantity in the central Atlantic Ocean continued to decline from the summer peak, **but August 2022 abundance (~11 million tons) was nevertheless greater than August of all previous years** (this record for August was last set in 2021)**.** Of note, over half of this total was recorded within the Caribbean Sea (CS), which means **CS levels have decreased only slightly (< 10%) throughout the last 3 months**. This comports with continuing significant beaching events reported throughout the nations/islands within the CS. In contrast, the amount in the Gulf of Mexico has decreased by > 20% from July to August, suggesting fewer beaching events around the GoM.

Looking ahead, we expect *Sargassum* trends to follow previous major bloom years (2018, 2021), whereby tonnage will likely continue to decrease in the coming months, with a 2022 minimum abundance likely in November. The CS may finally begin to see some relief by October. Transport of *Sargassum* into the Gulf of Mexico (GoM) will likely continue into early September, but at lower levels than observed in August. More updates will be provided by the end of September 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).