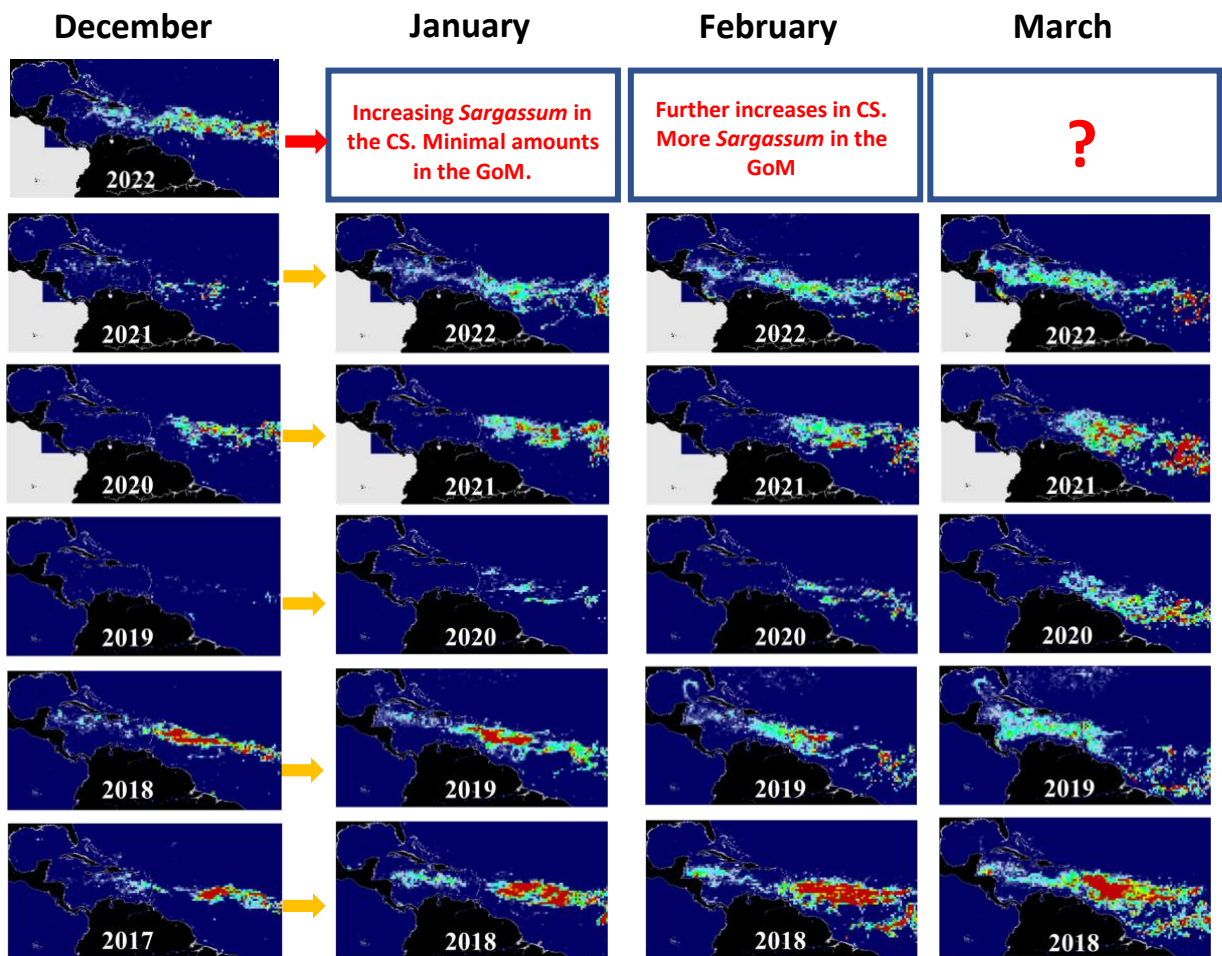




The maps below show *Sargassum* abundance, with warm colors representing higher values. In December 2022, the overall *Sargassum* quantity in the central Atlantic Ocean reversed its continuous decline in previous months. Record-high *Sargassum* quantities for December were observed, approximately double the amount recorded in November (of note, the November quantity reported in the previous bulletin was revised downward after data reprocessing). Small amounts of *Sargassum* coverage lingered in the central Caribbean Sea (CS), while essentially none was observed in the Gulf of Mexico (GoM). The *Sargassum* aggregation in the east-central Atlantic (noted in previous bulletins) has continued to migrate westward and grow in size.

Looking ahead, the doubling of *Sargassum* quantity from November to December does not bode well for the region, as such increases during this season have historically preceded major blooms in the following years. *Sargassum* abundance in the Caribbean Sea will likely increase into early 2023, starting with the Lesser Antilles in January. By spring 2023, a major bloom may develop in the western central Atlantic and the CS. We will continue to closely monitor *Sargassum* coverage, with more updates provided by the end of January 2023. 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.