

The maps below show *Sargassum* abundance, with warm colors representing higher values. During the month of September 2023, the *Sargassum* quantity in the Great Atlantic *Sargassum* Belt (extending from west Africa to the Gulf of Mexico) continued to decline, with a current wet weight of approximately 3 million metric tons. This decrease was expected, given that the 2023 *Sargassum* growth season in the central Atlantic concluded in August.

Compared to previous years, the current *Sargassum* abundance and distribution are similar to those of recent minor-bloom years (e.g., 2019, 2020). Small patches were observed in a narrow band spanning the central Atlantic. *Sargassum* in the Gulf of Mexico (GoM) was largely absent, while only a small quantity was identified in the Caribbean Sea (CS; less than 1 million tons), with most of the *Sargassum* found in the eastern CS. This abundance represents a reduction by half in the CS from August to September, which comports with the relative change in previous years.

Looking ahead, the overall *Sargassum* abundance within the central Atlantic (including the GoM and CS) will continue to decline into October and November. By December, we may see the first indications of the 2024 bloom, particularly in the eastern Atlantic (offshore west Africa). Nevertheless, we will closely monitor and track *Sargassum* in each region, and will provide more summary updates by the end of October 2023. Meanwhile, daily updates through near real-time imagery can be found under the *Sargassum* Watch System (SaWS, <https://optics.marine.usf.edu/projects/saws.html>).

