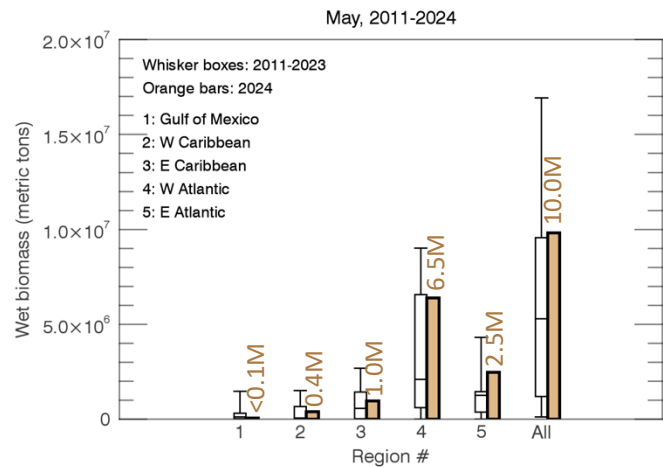


A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico\*  
May 31, 2024, by University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab  
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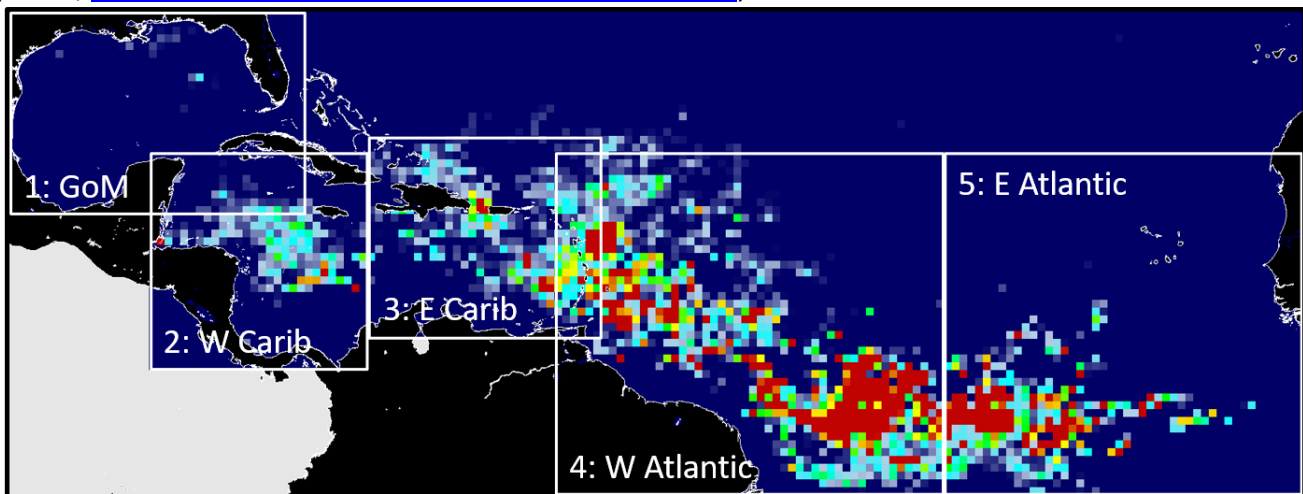
The map below shows average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of May 2024, with warm colors representing higher abundance. The *Sargassum* abundance for each region is compared with historical values in the same month of 2011 – 2023 in the whisker box plot below, where horizontal bars in each vertical box indicate minimum, 25%, 50%, 75%, and maximal historical values, respectively.

As predicted last month, *Sargassum* amount increased in May in every region except the E Atlantic, with a total biomass of 10.0 million metric tons. The W Atlantic region showed the largest increase of 1.9M tons in the last month, making it in the 75 percentile of historical levels for the month of May. The western Caribbean Sea (CS) experienced the largest relative increase (400%) to 0.4M tons, but it is still below the 75 percentile of historical levels, and most of this mass was restricted to the southern portion of this region still far away from Cancun. Total *Sargassum* amount in the eastern CS doubled to 1.0M tons, making it slightly above the 50 percentile of historical levels

*Sargassum* abundance in the Gulf of Mexico (GoM) remained low, but small amounts were found near the Mississippi River delta and in the Straits of Florida.



**Looking ahead:** As in previous years, we expect continuous increases of *Sargassum* in the central west Atlantic, the CS, and the GoM over the next month. Many Caribbean nations and islands will see increased *Sargassum* inundations in June, including the coastal regions along the Mexican Caribbean coast. The southeast coast of Florida (including the Florida Keys) may experience increased amounts of *Sargassum* but not to an alarming level. We will closely monitor and track *Sargassum* throughout the central Atlantic, and will provide more summary updates at the end of each month. Meanwhile, all previous monthly bulletins as well as daily updates through 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 and Gulf of Mexico. 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 the Federal funding agencies, take no responsibility for improper use or interpretation of the bulletin.