

Outlook of 2024 *Sargassum* blooms

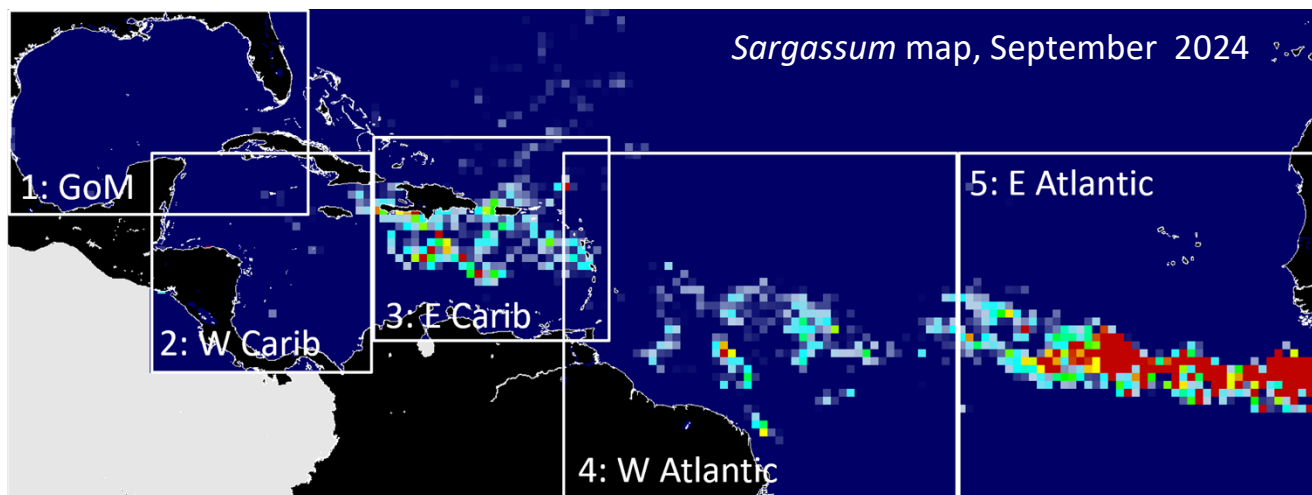
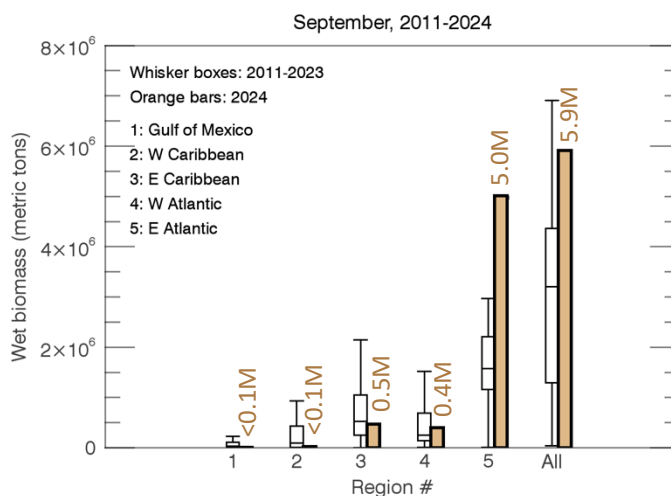
A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico*

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The map below shows average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of September 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, total *Sargassum* amount in each but the eastern Atlantic region continued to decline in September, with the western Atlantic experiencing the largest decline (from 1.5M tons in August to 0.4M tons in September). Compared to most previous years since 2011, however, *Sargassum* amount in the eastern Caribbean Sea (CS) and western Atlantic still remained relatively high (around or above the 50 percentile). The Gulf of Mexico (GoM) and western CS continued to be mostly free of *Sargassum*. One exception is the eastern Atlantic, where *Sargassum* amount doubled from the previous month. Previous seasonality suggests that the amount should decrease in the coming months.

Looking ahead: In all previous years, September is the month of continuous decline in *Sargassum* abundance in every but the East Atlantic region, , and this year is no exception. This trend is going to continue in the coming months to at least December. Specifically, the western CS and the GoM (including Florida) will continue to be *Sargassum* free. *Sargassum* inundation in the eastern CS will continue to decline. The eastern Atlantic region is also likely to see declined *Sargassum*, but month-to-month fluctuations may also occur due to multiple factors. We will closely monitor and track *Sargassum* throughout the central Atlantic. 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.