

## Outlook of 2024 *Sargassum* blooms

A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico\*

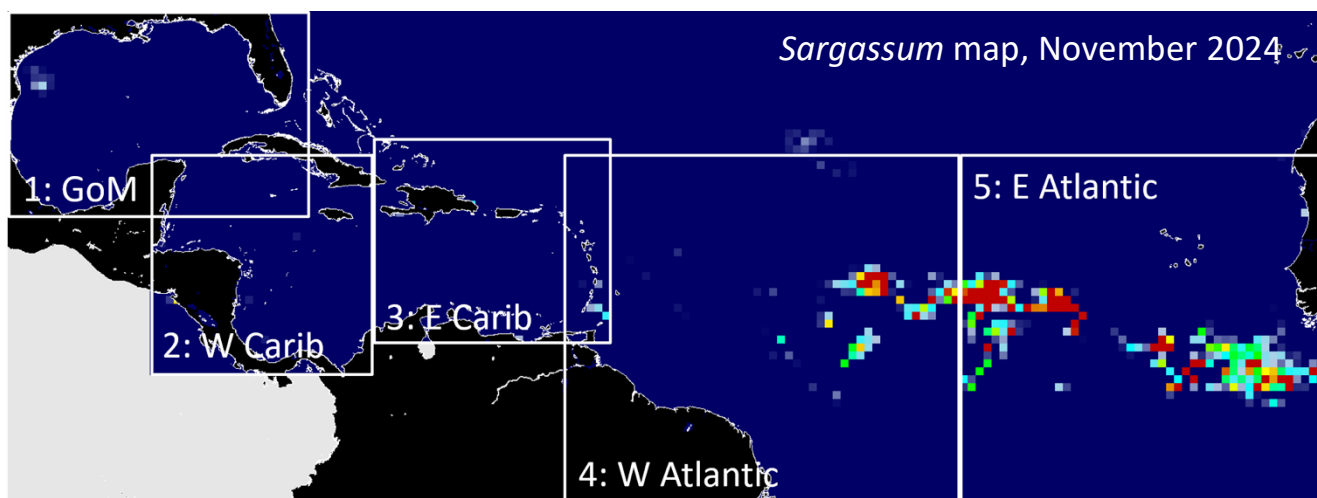
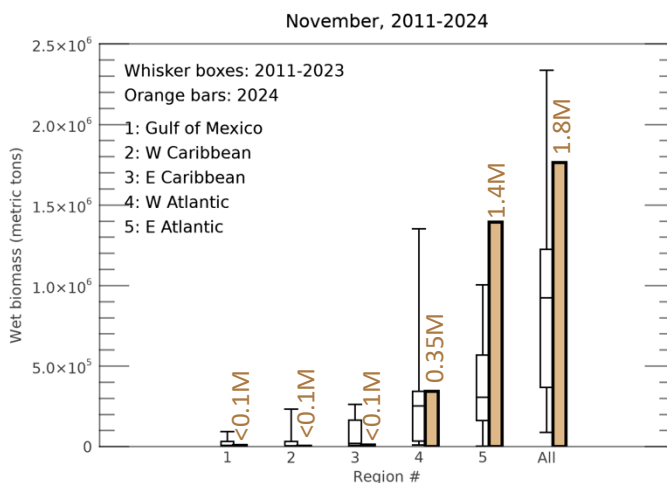
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The map below shows average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of November 2024, with warm colors representing higher abundance. The *Sargassum* abundance for each region is compared with historical values in the same month of 2011 – 2023 in the whisker 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 of the 5 regions either remained negligible or continued to decline in November, with the western Atlantic being an exception due to the east-west transport of *Sargassum*. Compared to most previous years since 2011, however, *Sargassum* amount in the western Atlantic still remained relatively high (about the 75 percentile), and continued to exceed the historical record in the eastern Atlantic. The Gulf of Mexico (GoM) and western CS continued to be mostly free of *Sargassum*.

**Looking ahead:** In most previous years, November – December are the months with minimal *Sargassum*, and this year appears to be no exception. Specifically, in December 2024 the CS and the GoM (including Florida) will continue to be *Sargassum* free. The western and eastern Atlantic regions may see slightly increased *Sargassum*, but month-to-month fluctuations may also occur due to multiple factors. On the other hand, if the total amount of *Sargassum* in the eastern Atlantic continued to remain at historical record levels in the next 1-2 months, then 2025 may be another major *Sargassum* year. 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.