

Outlook of 2025 *Sargassum* blooms

A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico*

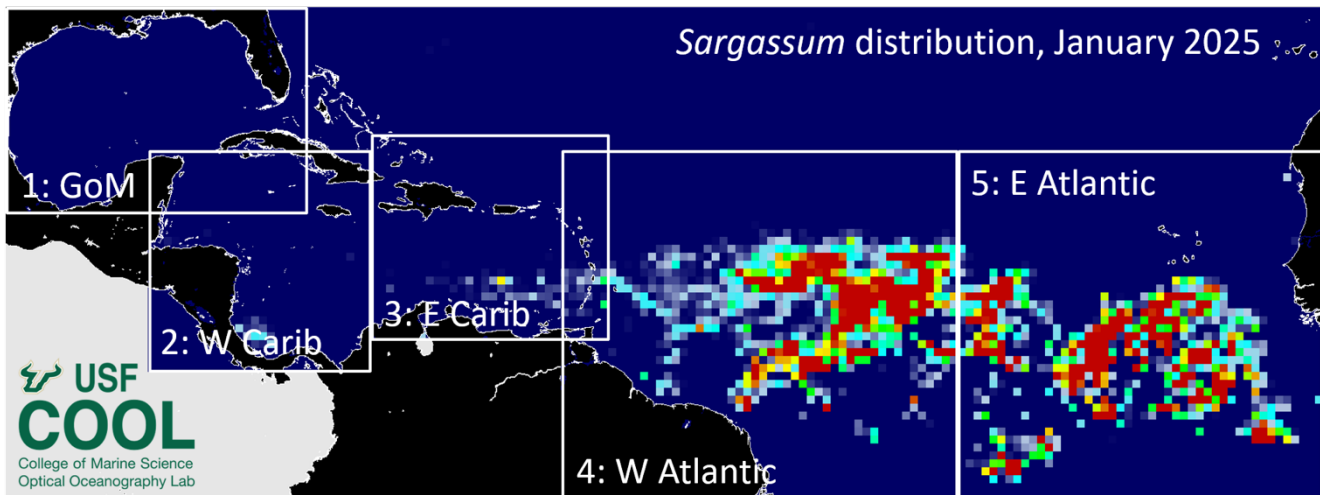
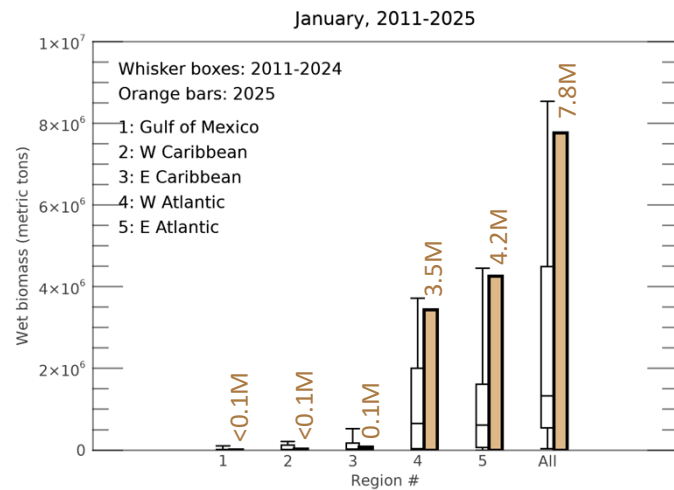
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The map below shows average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of January 2025, with warm colors representing higher abundance. The *Sargassum* abundance for each region is compared with historical values in the same month of 2011 – 2024 in the whisker box plot below, where horizontal bars in each vertical box indicate minimum, 25%, 50%, 75%, and maximal historical values, respectively.

As predicted one month ago, total *Sargassum* amount in the tropical Atlantic (both western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic) continued to increase from December to January, and remained negligible or very low in the Gulf of Mexico and western Caribbean Sea. Increased amount was also found in the eastern Caribbean Sea but total amount still remained low (~ 0.1 million metric tons). The spatial distributions in the tropical Atlantic remained stable but total amount nearly doubled in a month, suggesting local growth. Compared to most previous years since 2011, *Sargassum* amount in the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic all exceeded each region's 75 percentile. More *Sargassum* entered the Caribbean Sea through the Lesser Antilles.

Looking ahead: As in most previous years, February is expected to see increased *Sargassum* from January. More *Sargassum* is expected to enter the Caribbean Sea through the Lesser Antilles. *Sargassum* in the western Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico will likely remain very low. However, the continuous and significant increases in total amounts of *Sargassum* in the tropical Atlantic reinforce our earlier prediction that 2025 is likely another major *Sargassum* year. We will closely monitor and track *Sargassum* throughout the central Atlantic, and will have better predictions on whether and when large amounts of *Sargassum* will reach Florida. 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 bulletin is meant to provide general outlooks of current and future bloom conditions 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. Credit for the images and information should be given to the Optical Oceanography Lab at the USF College of Marine Science.