

## Outlook of 2026 *Sargassum* blooms

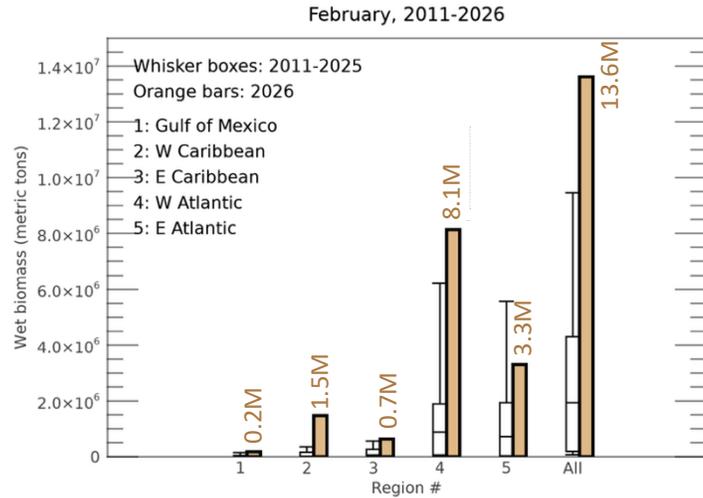
A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of America\*

February 28, 2026, by the University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab

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The map below shows the average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of February 2026, with warm colors representing higher abundance. The top color (red) indicates that 0.4% of the ocean surface is covered by *Sargassum*, meaning that *Sargassum* clumps and mats are scattered here and there in the location. The *Sargassum* abundance for each region is compared with historical values in the same month of 2011 – 2025 in the whisker box plot below, where horizontal bars in each vertical box indicate minimal, 25%, 50%, 75%, and maximal historical values, respectively.

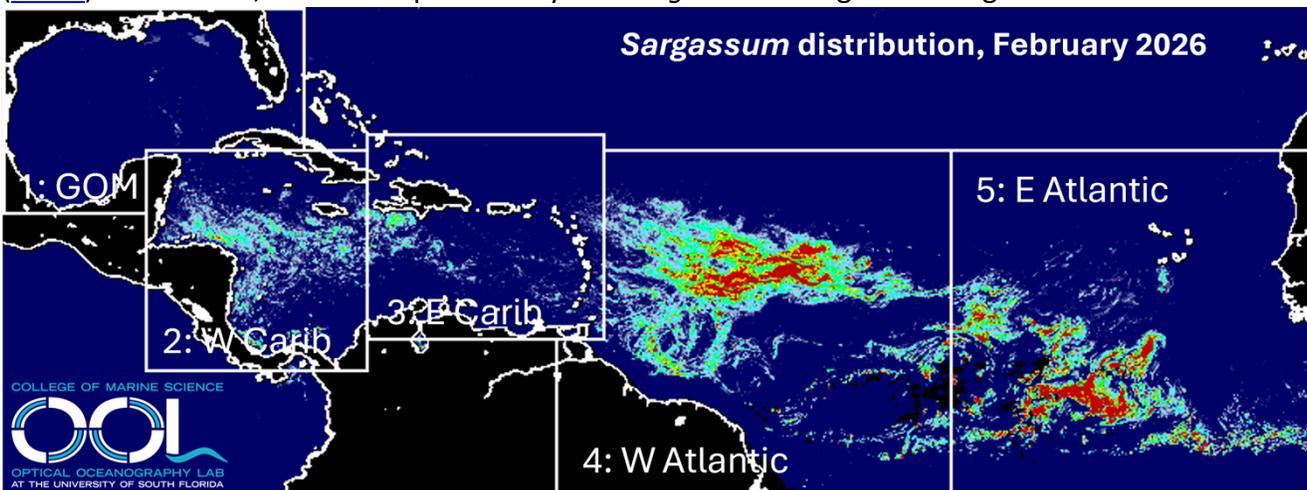
As predicted last month, *Sargassum* in most regions continued to grow, including the W Caribbean, W Atlantic, and E Atlantic. In the Gulf and E Caribbean, total *Sargassum* amount remained stable. Except for the E Atlantic region, every other region continued to see record-high *Sargassum* amount for the month of February. The distribution map continued to show three separated large masses in the E Atlantic, W Atlantic, and the W Caribbean, respectively. Beaching events likely continued in some of the W Caribbean



regions, including Belize, Honduras, and the Mexican Caribbean coast. Some of the Lesser Antilles islands may have seen increased *Sargassum* on the windward side.

**Looking ahead:** *Sargassum* amount in most regions is set to increase in the coming month. The W Caribbean and the windward side of the Lesser Antilles will continue to see beaching events. *Sargassum* amount in the Gulf will remain low. Because of the continuous growth from November to February and because of the record-high *Sargassum* amount in most regions, 2026 is set to be another major *Sargassum* year (i.e., *Sargassum* amount exceeds 75% of the historical values).

All previous monthly bulletins as well as daily imagery can be found under the *Sargassum* Watch System ([SaWS](#)). Meanwhile, we will keep a close eye on *Sargassum* changes in all regions.



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.