

Outlook of 2026 *Sargassum* blooms

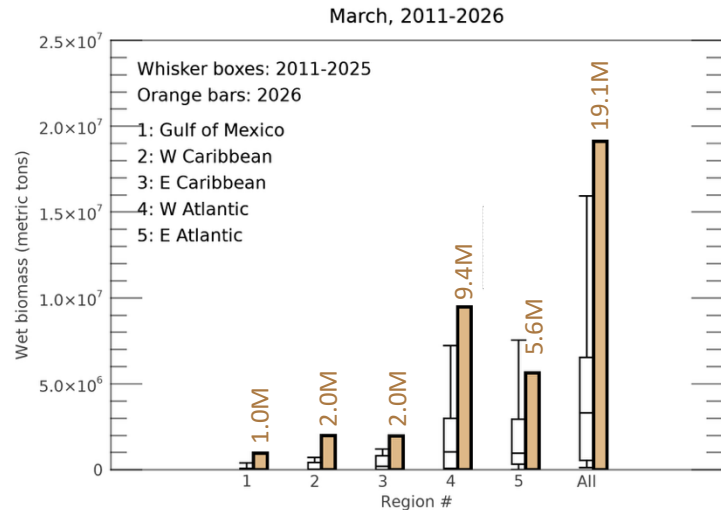
A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of America*

March 31, 2026, by the University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab

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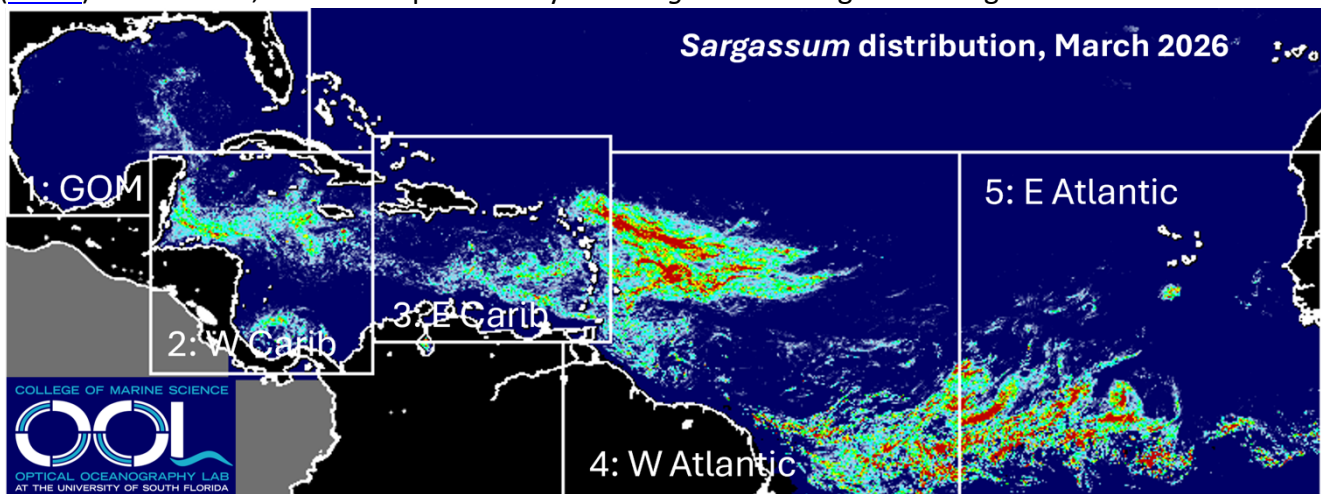
The map below shows the average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of March 2026, with warm colors representing higher abundance. The top color (red) indicates that 0.4% of the ocean surface is covered by *Sargassum*, meaning that *Sargassum* clumps and mats are scattered here and there in the location. 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* continued to grow and move to the west, resulting in increased *Sargassum* amount in every region shown in the map. Except for the E Atlantic region, every region continued to see record-high *Sargassum* amount for the month of March. The distribution map continued to show three separated large masses in the E Atlantic, W Atlantic, and the W Caribbean (including the Gulf), respectively. Major beaching events appear to have occurred in the W Caribbean (e.g., Belize, Honduras, and the Mexican Caribbean coast) and around Lesser Antilles islands.



Looking ahead: *Sargassum* amount in most regions will continue to increase in the coming month. Beaching events in both the W Caribbean and the E Caribbean will continue. The Florida Keys and southeast coast of Florida will likely see moderate beaching events in the coming month as *Sargassum* in the Gulf will continue to be transported to these locations. The year of 2026 is set to be another major *Sargassum* year (i.e., *Sargassum* amount exceeds 75% of the historical values), and likely to be a record year by summer 2026.

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.