

## Outlook of 2026 *Sargassum* blooms

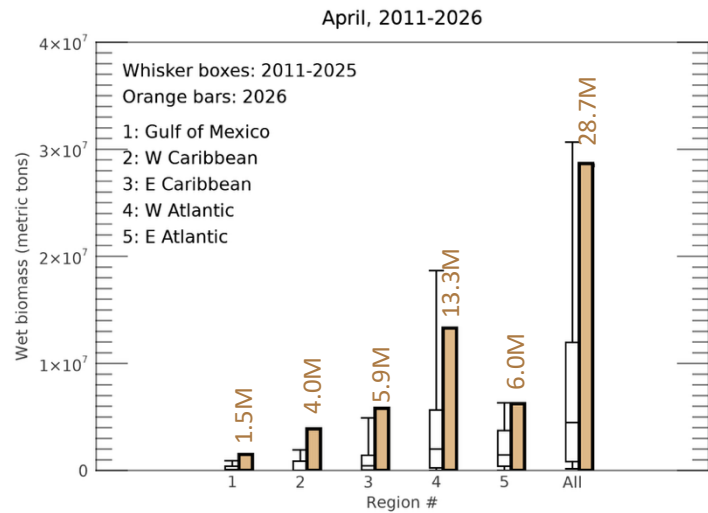
A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of America\*

April 30, 2026, by the University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab

([bbarnes4@usf.edu](mailto:bbarnes4@usf.edu), [yuyuan@usf.edu](mailto:yuyuan@usf.edu), [huc@usf.edu](mailto:huc@usf.edu))

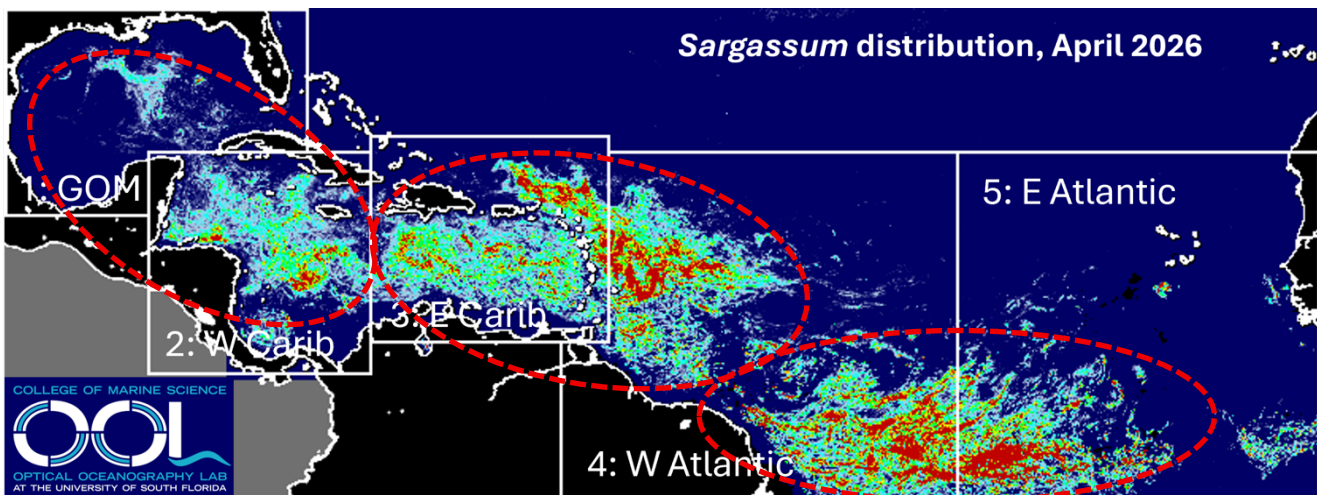
The map below shows the average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of April 2026, with warm colors representing higher abundance. The top color (red) indicates that 0.4% of the ocean surface is covered by *Sargassum*, meaning that *Sargassum* clumps and mats are scattered here and there in the location. 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.

The trend in the last few months has continued, resulting in increased *Sargassum* amount in every region shown in the map. Nearly every region also continued to see record-high *Sargassum* amount for the month of April. The three separate large masses, as shown in the dashed outlines on the map, also continued. By mid-April, *Sargassum* expanded to the entire Caribbean Sea, with substantial amounts transported to the Gulf. Major beaching events must have occurred around the Caribbean and Lesser Antilles islands. Moderate beaching events have also occurred along the southeast coast of Florida.



**Looking ahead:** *Sargassum* amount in most regions will continue to increase in the coming months. Beaching events around the Caribbean and southeast coast of Florida will continue and likely increase. Some beaching events may also occur around Louisiana and Texas coasts. 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, high-resolution *Sargassum* maps for selected coastal regions are also available in near real-time under “Satellite Data Products => High Resolution” of the [OOL](#) Website.



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.