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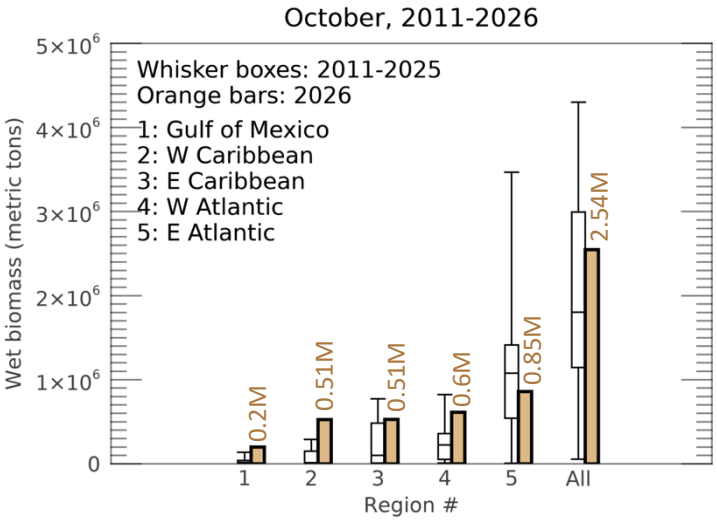
Outlook of 2026 *Sargassum* blooms

A perspective for the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of America*

October 31, 2026, by the University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab
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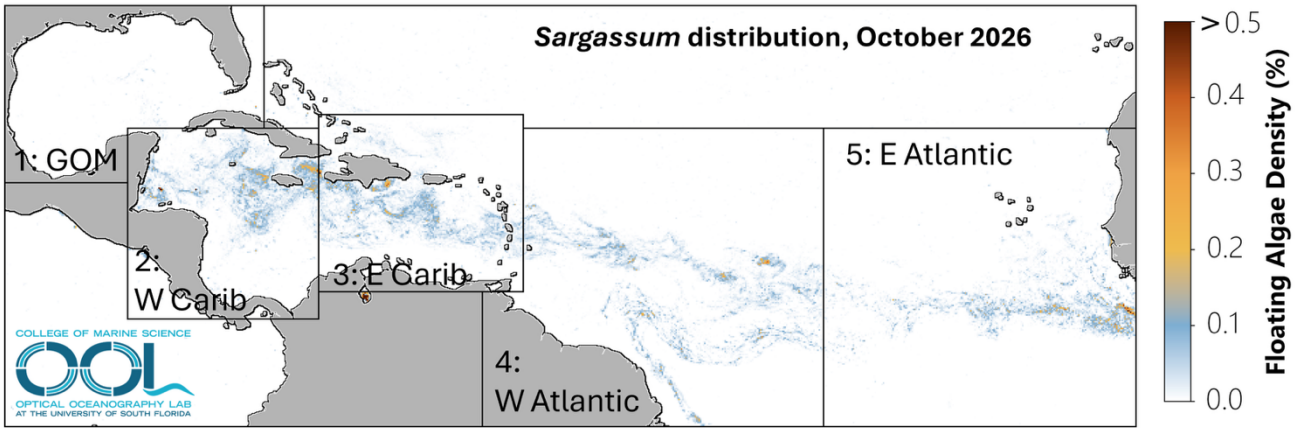
The map below shows the average *Sargassum* abundance for the month of October 2026, with warm colors representing higher abundance. The top color (dark red) indicates that 0.5% of the ocean surface is covered by *Sargassum*, meaning that *Sargassum* clumps and mats are scattered here and there in the 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, for all months of September between 2011 and 2025. The vertical orange bars represent September of the current year.

As expected and consistent with all previous years, total *Sargassum* amount in every region continued to decline substantially in October, more than halved in most regions. However, total amount in every but the east Atlantic still exceeded the maximum or 75 percentiles of historical levels for October. The spatial distribution patterns remained similar to those in September, with a narrow *Sargassum* "belt" still stretching from the coast of West Africa to the Gulf.



Looking ahead: *Sargassum* amount in all regions will continue to decrease until possibly end of November or December. Meanwhile, beaching events around Florida should be negligible. Some beaching events around the Caribbean will likely continue, but the severity is much lower than in previous months. We will keep a close eye on whether there are anomalous changes in the coming months.

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.