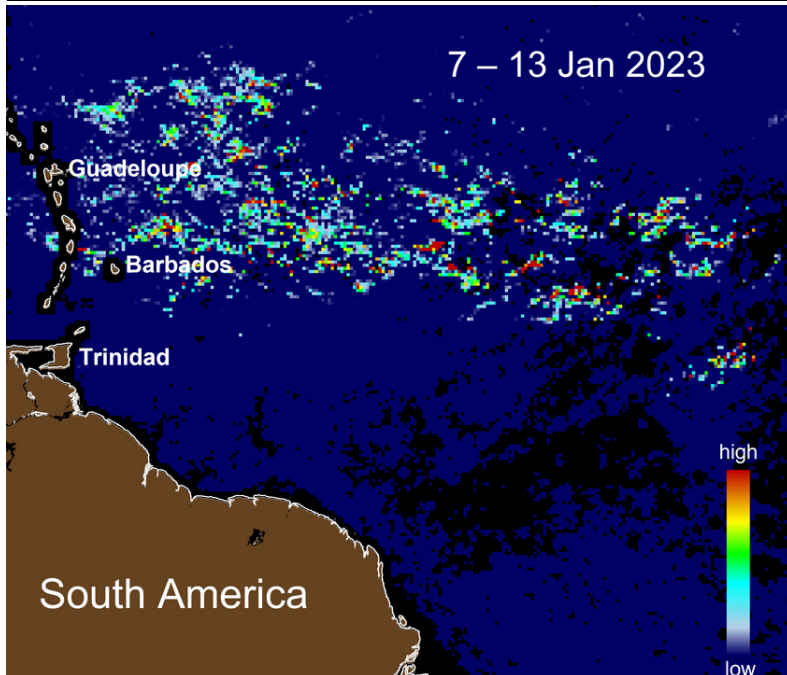


SARGASSUM

SUB-REGIONAL OUTLOOK BULLETIN



JAN 2023 | VOL 2 | ISSUE 8

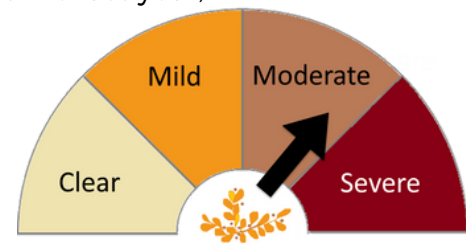


Sargassum image sourced from Optical Oceanography Laboratory USF.
Click on picture above to access the source image.

The map above is a satellite image processed to show sargassum abundance over a 7-day period. Warm colours represent high sargassum abundance. **Sargassum Watch System (SaWS)** website: <https://optics.marine.usf.edu/projects/saws.html>

SARGASSUM INFLUX WILL BE MODERATE TO SEVERE OVER THE NEXT 3 MONTHS (mid JAN - mid APR 2023)

- The Eastern Caribbean islands have experienced mild conditions in the final quarter of 2022, except for an unexpected influx of sargassum at the end of December lasting over the New Year.
- The level of sargassum arriving now is moderate, but is expected to increase further in the coming weeks.
- There is twice as much (204% more) sargassum visible out in the Atlantic than this time last year,

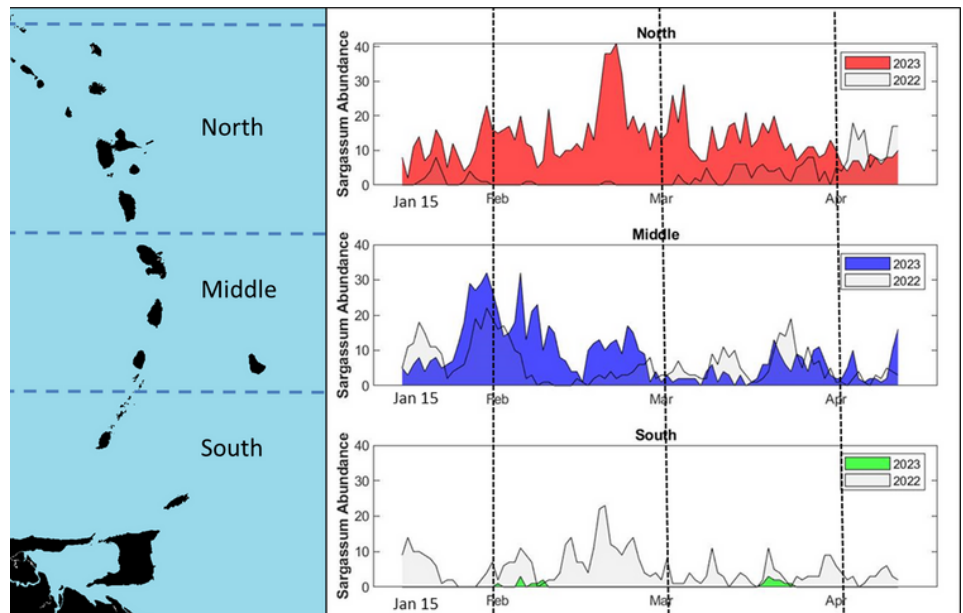


Sargassum abundance intensity level
(based on image 7 -13 January 2023)

current outlook (mid-JAN 2023 - mid APR 2023)

There will be a marked difference between the islands of the Eastern Caribbean in the amount of sargassum they are likely to experience over the next 3 months with Northern and Middle islands seeing a lot more sargassum than customary for this early in the season, whilst Southern islands are expected to remain clear..

- **Northern islands** can expect moderate to severe influxes continuously through to mid-April.
- **Middle islands** will experience increasing sargassum influxes for the rest of January and then a gradual decrease through February. Mild to moderate conditions can be expected through March to mid April.
- **Southern islands** should escape this early season sargassum and remain virtually clear through to mid April.



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TOURISM SECTOR

- Influxes of sargassum will be heavier than normal for the remainder of this tourist season in the Northern and Middle islands, whilst Southern islands will enjoy clear beaches..
- However, travel agents searching for sargassum-free beaches should note that leeward (west coast) beaches in all of the EC islands rarely receive sargassum even when influx events are severe.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FISHERIES SECTOR

- The pelagic fishing season has started with mixed results with many fishers finding conditions unpredictable, whilst a few have had windfall catches of flyingfish.
- We anticipate continued disruption for those fishing in the Northern and Middle island waters, but hope that dolphinfish will be plentiful under the sargassum rafts.
- Fisherfolk in the Southern islands will continue to have clear mooring and landing sites .

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Continuous inundation of beaches by sargassum in the Northern and Middle islands over the next 3 months will likely result in brown tide events as the sargassum decays, causing further damage to nearshore habitats (coral reefs and seagrasses). .

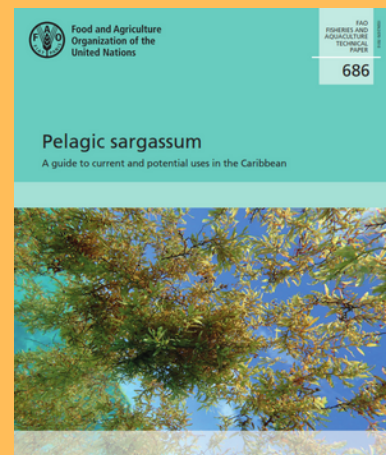
SPOTLIGHT ON SARGASSUM INNOVATION



Improving National Sargassum Management Capacities in the Caribbean

A new 3-yr UNDP project to enhance national capacity for the management of sargassum seaweed is underway in five eastern Caribbean countries. The project will provide equipment, expertise, and technical knowledge to assist collection, removal, transport and disposal of stranded sargassum. Supporting activities will include monitoring of stranded sargassum quantities, development of collection and management plans, training in removal, transport and disposal of sargassum, and facilitation of regional dialogues, communications, sharing experiences and lessons learnt. The project also seeks to identify downstream opportunities for MSME's on the use of freshly harvested sargassum through partnerships with the UNDP Blue Accelerator Lab and other strategic partners in the region. [Click here for more detail](#)

USEFUL RESOURCES



[Click here to download](#)

EVENTS



Save the date: 9-10 March 2023 UWI will be hosting its 3rd Sargassum Symposium. Details will be posted by month end.



Save the date: 4-9 June 2023 Special Sargassum Session, Mallorca, Spain. [Click here](#)

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Click on the titles below to access articles

- Growth rates of pelagic sargassum in the Mexican Caribbean (Magana-Gallegos et al. 2023).
- EU Blue Economy Report with focus on sargassum (EUMOFA 2023).
- How is pelagic sargassum-associated biodiversity assessed: insights from the literature (Alleyne 2022).
- **Visit the UWI-CERMES Sargassum Reference Repository to keep up to date with publications:** <https://bit.ly/SargRefRepository>