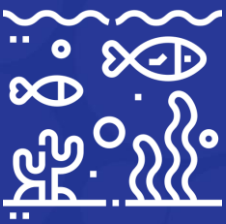




The Sargassum Information hub:

Exploiting satellite data to support Sargassum
monitoring and forecasting



Plenary session #2

Ecosystem Conservation



Shelly-Ann Cox

*Fisheries Management Specialist
Founder and CEO Blue Shell
Productions
Barbados, West Indies*

5th Symposium | Accra, Ghana | 24 – 28 October 2022



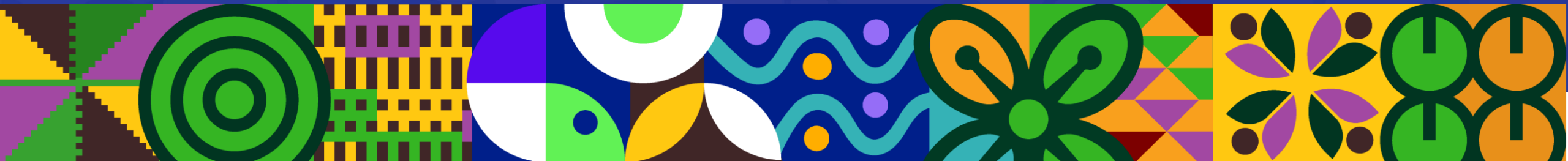
5th Symposium | Accra, Ghana | 24 – 28 October 2022

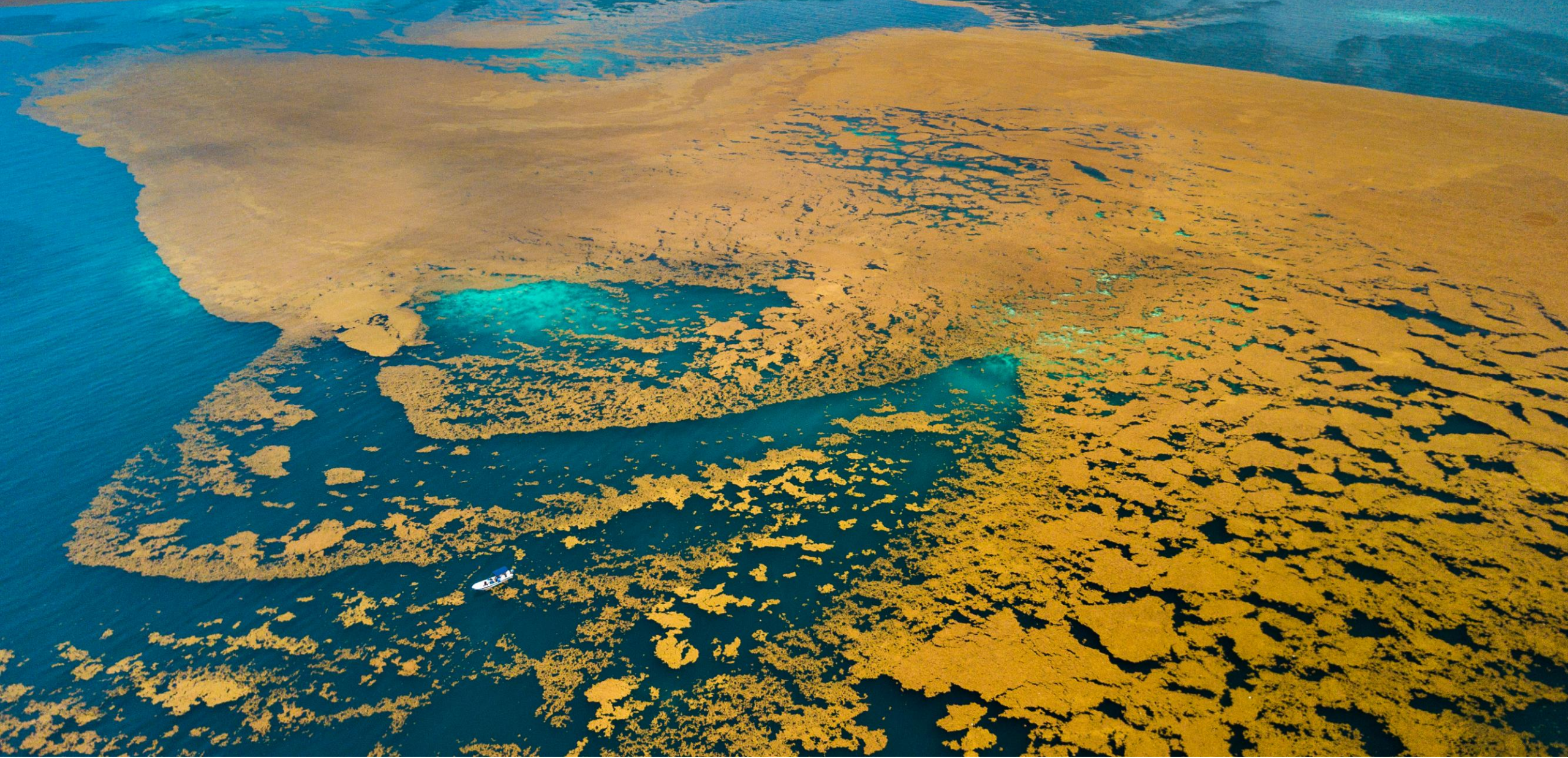


The Sargassum Information Hub:

Exploiting satellite data to
support sargassum monitoring
and forecasting

Dr. Shelly-Ann Cox, Blue Shell Productions

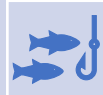




Negative Impacts are multi-sectoral



Tourism



Fisheries



Environment



Coastal Living



Public health



Maritime
transport



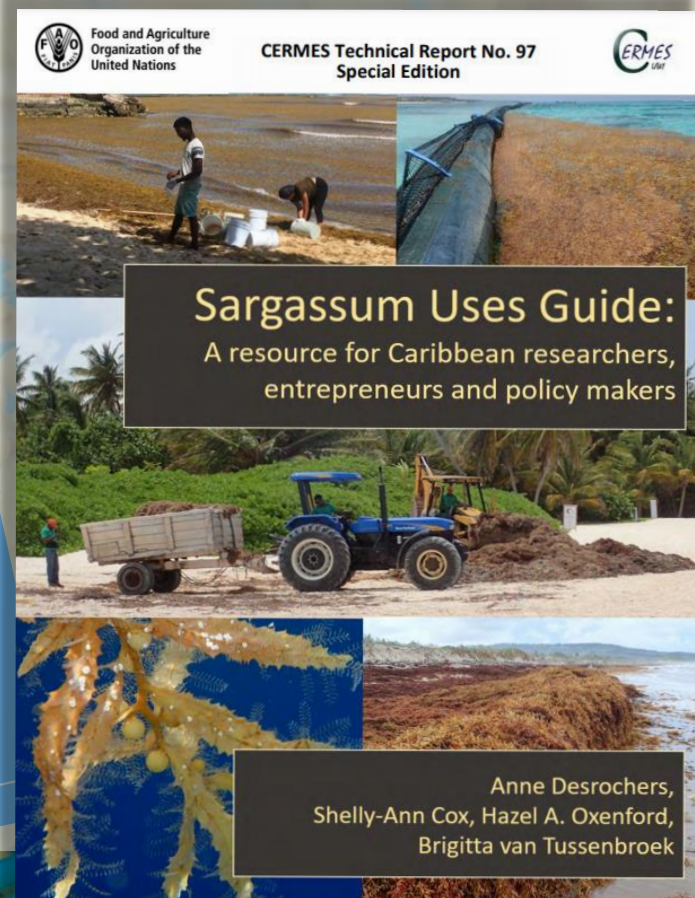
Energy

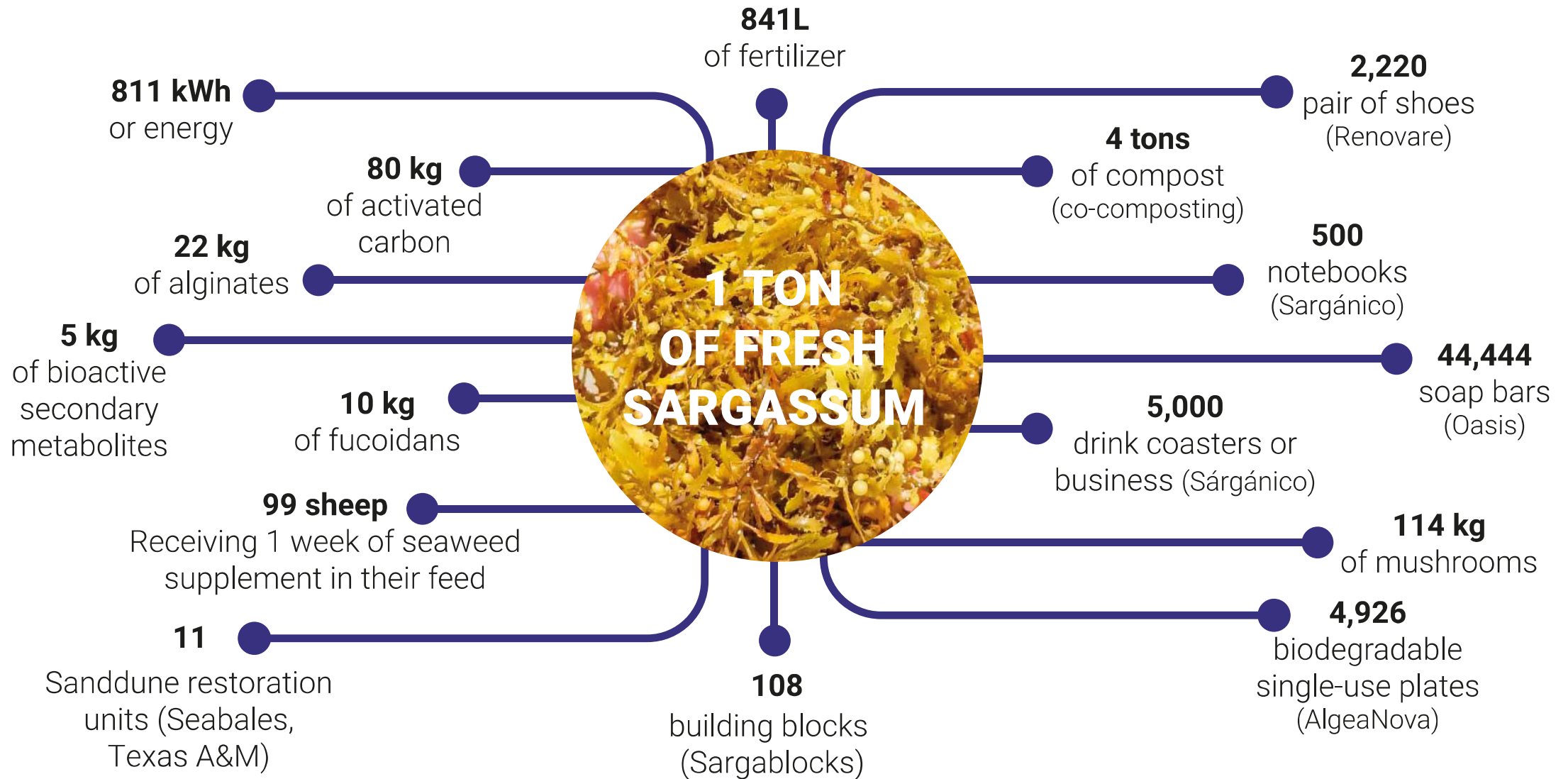


Water



Sargassum Opportunities



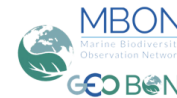


Sargassum Information Hub

<https://sargassumhub.org>



HUB Partners



2020

PROMOTION & UPDATES

Promotion of the hub and periodic updates. Sargassum working group meetings lead to development of content

2022

LAUNCH

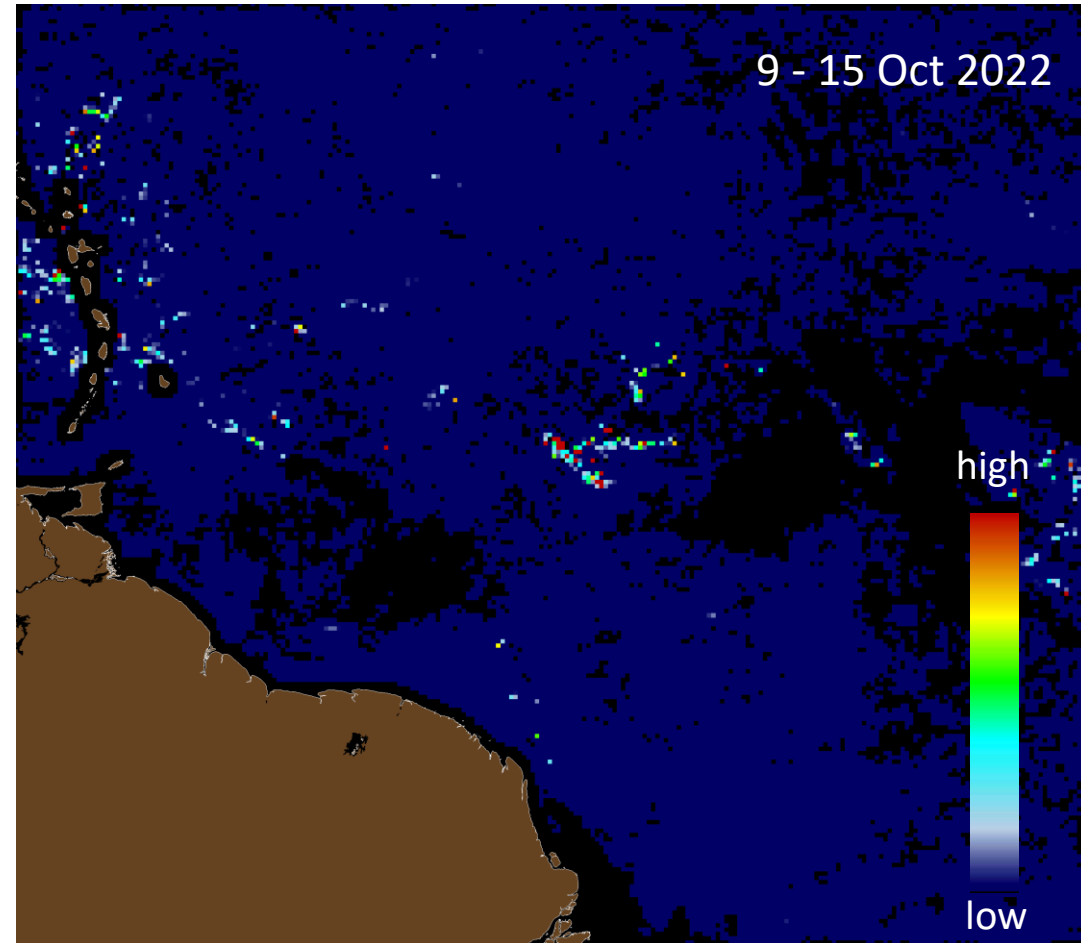
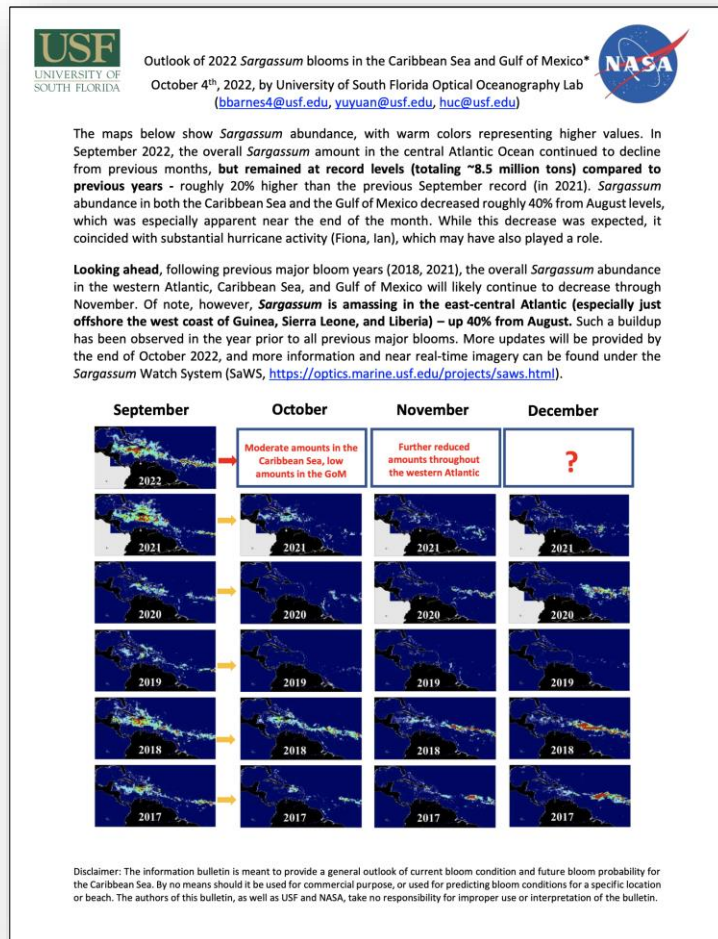
Co-design and co-development participatory process culminates with a launch at the All-Atlantic 2021: Sargassum side event - EU4OceanObs (2 June)

2021

HUB 2.0 LAUNCH

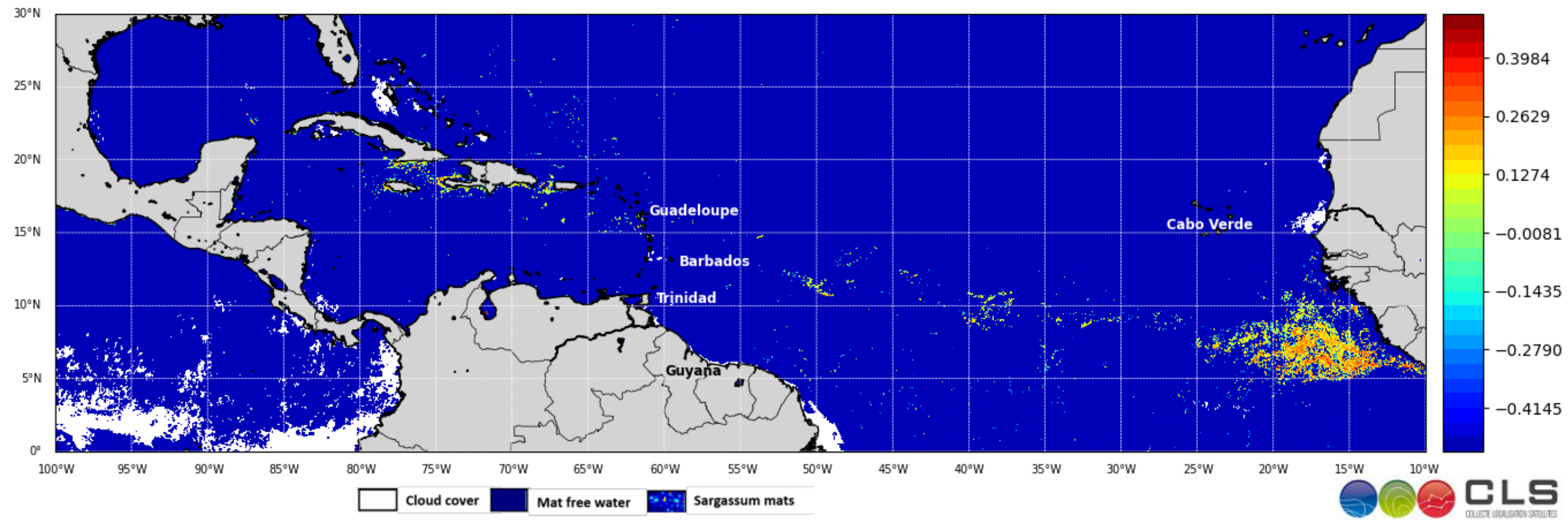
Version 2 launched at the Seaweed around the clock 24-hour event (2 June)

Satellite-based Sargassum Watch System (SaWS)



CLS - SAMTool

OLCI / MODIS NFAI CLS 7 days Mean (2022-10-12 00:00:00 UTC)



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Satellite-based Sargassum Watch System (SaWS)

Bulletins

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Disclaimer

The information bulletin is meant to provide a general outlook of current bloom condition and future bloom probability for the Caribbean Sea. 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 NASA, take no responsibility for improper use or interpretation of the bulletin. Any use of the image, data, or graph from this bulletin page in reports or publications should obtain permission from the USF OOL group.

This page provides links to Sargassum forecast or outlook bulletins (see bottom of this page), which are updated routinely. The bulletins started in early February 2018, and they are meant to give an outlook of Sargassum bloom probability in certain regions in the upcoming months, based on bloom conditions in previous months, and previous years.

Sargassum blooms in the Caribbean Sea

In January 2018, unusually high amount of Sargassum was caught in satellite imagery in both the Caribbean and the central West Atlantic. While the former could only be peered by January 2015, the latter represented a historical record. Based on these observations and based on the connectivity between the two regions, in early February 2018 we generated and distributed our first 1-page Sargassum outlook bulletin for the Caribbean Sea, and predicted that 2018 would be a major bloom year for the Caribbean.

While the monthly bulletins can be found at the bottom of this page, the amount of Sargassum increased during the month of December 2020, showing a total Sargassum coverage of 33 km² as compared with a historical mean of 60 km² between 2011 and 2017, for the area bounded by 8-23°N and 89-58°W. The overall bloom extent in 2019 was significantly higher than most of the years during 2011-2018 for the Caribbean and the central West Atlantic. The reasons behind this record-high bloom and the strong decrease since September 2019, however, are yet to be determined.

2011 Dec

2012 Dec

2013 Dec

2014 Dec

2015 Dec

2016 Dec

2017 Dec

2018 Dec

2019 Dec

2020 Dec

Sargassum Outlook Bulletin, December 2020

Sargassum Outlook Bulletin, November 2020

Sargassum Outlook Bulletin, October 2020

PeerJ

ERISNet: deep neural network for Sargassum detection along the coastline of the Mexican Caribbean

Javier Arellano-Verdejo^{1,*}, Hugo E. Lazcano-Hernandez¹ and Nancy Cabanillas-Terán²

¹Estación para la Recopilación de Información Satelital ERIS-Chetumal, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, Chetumal, Quintana Roo, México

²Centros CONACYT-El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, Chetumal, Quintana Roo, México

^{*}These authors contributed equally to this work.

ABSTRACT

Recently, Caribbean coasts have experienced atypical massive arrivals of pelagic Sargassum with negative consequences both ecologically and economically. Based on deep learning techniques, this study proposes a novel algorithm for floating and accumulated pelagic Sargassum detection along the coastline of Quintana Roo, Mexico. Using convolutional and recurrent neural networks architectures, a deep neural network (named ERISNet) was designed specifically to detect these macroalgae along the coastline through remote sensing support. A new dataset which includes pixel values with and without Sargassum was built to train and test ERISNet. Aqua-MODIS imagery was used to build the dataset. After the learning process, the designed algorithm achieves a 90% of probability in its classification skills. ERISNet provides a novel insight to detect accurately algal blooms arrivals.

Subjects

Computational Science, Environmental Impacts, Spatial and Geographic Information Science

Keywords

Remote Sensing, Neural Networks, Algal blooms, Sargassum, MODIS, Mexico, Deep learning

INTRODUCTION

Pelagic Sargassum is formed by brown macroalgae *S. fluitans* and *S. natans*, and constitutes floating ecosystems serving as habitats and nurseries for important marine species like sea turtles, fishes, invertebrates, and micro and macro-epiphytes (Riosmena, Turner & Hobbie, 2006; Williams, Williams, Williams & Hobbie, 2012). However, over the last seven years, Caribbean shores have experienced atypical massive shoals of pelagic Sargassum, with exceptional abundances for the Mexican Caribbean during the summers of 2015 and 2018. Massive influx was observed in numerous Caribbean beaches linked with the accumulation of Sargassum spp. (hereafter Sargassum) (Gouveia, Young & King, 2013; van Tussenbroek et al., 2017). Since 2011, these extensive off-shore Sargassum shoals have appeared in unprecedented ways in oceanic waters off the coast of northern Brazil (De Saedey et al., 2012; Gouveia, Young & King, 2013; Sistioli et al., 2017), actually, this events of Sargassum blooms were registered on the African coast as well (De Saedey et al., 2012; Mantoura, Hobbie & van Tussenbroek, 2017). Those shoals likely have origins in the North Equatorial Recirculation Region (NERR).

Submitted

21 December 2018

Accepted

21 March 2019

Published

1 May 2019

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Academic editor

Saharish Natchan-Castillo

Additional Information and Declarations can be found on page 16

DOI

10.7717/peerj.4842

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Physical Oceanography Division (PHOD)

Experimental Weekly Sargassum Inundation Report (SIR v1.2)

By the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the University of South Florida (USF)

Status: Dec 22-28, 2020

Since 2011, large accumulations of Sargassum is a recurrent problem in the Caribbean Sea, in the Gulf of Mexico and tropical Atlantic. These events can cause significant economic, environmental and public health harm. These experimental Sargassum Inundation Reports (SIR) provide an overview of the risk of sargassum coastal inundation in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico regions. Using in-core reports the AFAI (Alternative Floating Algae Index) fields generated by the University of South Florida (USF), the algorithm analyzes the AFAI values in the neighborhood (75 km) of each coastal pixel and, computing the difference between those values and a multiple baseline, classifies the risk into three categories: low (blue), medium (orange) and high (red). In black are areas with not enough data. The two all-hires thresholds used for classification are 0.001 and 0.001. The vectors in the image represent the geostrophic current. SIR is the result of the collaboration between the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (NOAA/AOML), NOAA-CoastWatch/OceanWatch, and USF.

Get Report in PDF

View Other Reports:

Dec 22-28, 2020

View

Gulf of Mexico

30°N

20°N

90°W

80°W

70°W

60°W

50°W

40°W

30°W

20°W

10°W

0°

10°E

20°E

30°E

40°E

50°E

60°E

70°E

80°E

90°E

100°E

110°E

120°E

130°E

140°E

150°E

160°E

170°E

180°

190°

200°

210°

220°

230°

240°

250°

260°

270°

280°

290°

300°

310°

320°

330°

340°

350°

360°


0

50

100

Percentage of Sargassum

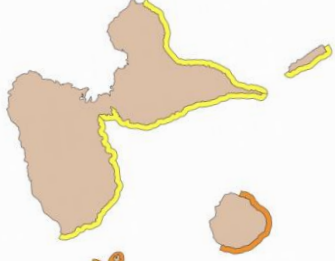
Bulletins



Bulletin de surveillance et de prévision
d'échouement des sargasses pélagiques
pour la Guadeloupe

Jeudi 13 Octobre 2022

Carte de risque d'échouement pour les 4 prochains jours :



Risque d'échouement faible

Risque d'échouement fort

Risque d'échouement moyen

Risque d'échouement très fort

Indice de confiance : 2 / 5

Zone	Estimation du Risque
Nord Grande Terre	Moyen
Sud Grande Terre	Moyen
Désirade	Moyen
Basse Terre (côte sud-est)	Fort
Les Saintes	Fort
Marie Galante	



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SARGASSUM

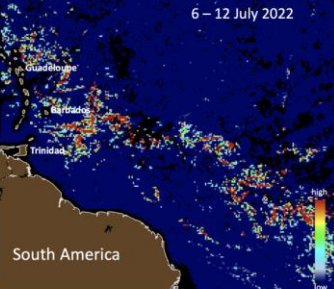
SUB-REGIONAL OUTLOOK BULLETIN



JULY 2022 | VOL 2 | ISSUE 5



6 - 12 July 2022




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 EVENTS WILL BE MODERATE TO SEVERE OVER THE NEXT 3 MONTHS (JULY-SEPT 2022)

- The Eastern Caribbean islands experienced severe sargassum influxes at the beginning of the third quarter of 2022. (Click here to view photos)
- The level of sargassum arriving is still severe and is expected to continue in the coming weeks.
- There is 20% less sargassum visible out in the Atlantic than this time last year, but more than seen in 2018, the worst year to date.



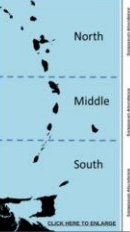
Sargassum abundance intensity level
(based on image 6 - 12 July 2022)

CURRENT OUTLOOK (JULY-SEPT 2022)

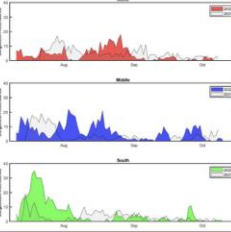
Note: Current levels of cloud cover on satellite images could be compromising the accuracy of this forecast.

Overall, the islands of the Eastern Caribbean can expect moderate to severe influxes over the next 3 months. Compared with last year (grey) the northern islands will likely get slightly higher influxes, but the middle and southern islands can expect far more than last year.

- Northern islands** are set to receive moderate influxes from now until early August when levels are expected to increase to severe levels, followed by a decrease in intensity levels just after the beginning of September.
- Middle islands** will experience severe influxes over the 3-month period, with spikes expected from now until late August, with a short lull before increasing again in mid-September.
- Southern islands** are expected to receive severe influxes of sargassum with peaks until early August, followed by moderate levels until the end of September.




North
Middle
South




CLICK HERE TO ENLARGE

Sargassum Sub-regional Outlook Bulletin

VOL 2 | ISSUE 5



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA



NASA

Outlook of 2022 Sargassum blooms in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico*
October 4th, 2022, by University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab
(bbarnes4@usf.edu, yuyuan@usf.edu, huc@usf.edu)

The maps below show Sargassum abundance, with warm colors representing higher values. In September 2022, the overall Sargassum amount in the central Atlantic Ocean continued to decline from previous months, but remained at record levels (totaling ~8.5 million tons) compared to previous years - roughly 20% higher than the previous September record (in 2021). Sargassum abundance in both the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico decreased roughly 40% from August levels, which was especially apparent near the end of the month. While this decrease was expected, it coincided with substantial hurricane activity (Fiona, Ian), which may have also played a role.

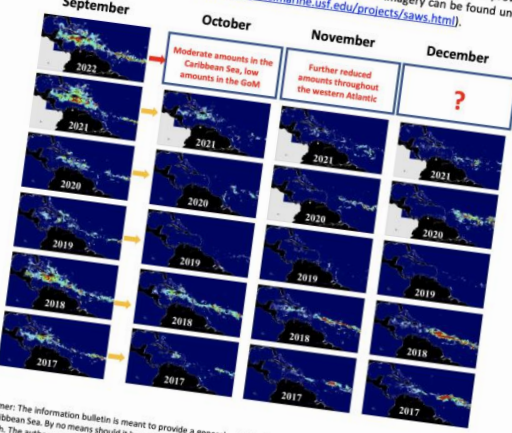
Looking ahead, following previous major bloom years (2018, 2021), the overall Sargassum abundance in the western Atlantic, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico will likely continue to decrease through November. Of note, however, Sargassum is amassing in the east-central Atlantic (especially just offshore the west coast of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia) - up 40% from August. Such a buildup has been observed in the year prior to all previous major blooms. More updates will be provided by the end of October 2022, and more information and near real-time imagery can be found under the Sargassum Watch System (SaWS, <https://optics.marine.usf.edu/projects/saws.html>).

September

October

November

December



Disclaimer: The information bulletin is meant to provide a general outlook of current bloom condition and future bloom probability for the Caribbean Sea. 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 NASA, take no responsibility for improper use or interpretation of the bulletin.

<https://sargassumhub.org/monitoring/>

Monitoring Systems



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Reporting Site: Pelagic Sargassum in the Caribbean - 2019

Please use this form to report details of your observations of sargassum during 2019. All inputs are not required.

Please report each observation separately. You may use this form to make multiple reports, both for multiple observations of the same sargassum mass and for observations of new sargassum masses.

We will not share your email address and contact information without your permission.

(Spam Check - This helps prevent robot software from using this form to submit spam.)
Please enter the number 7.

Date of observation (mm/dd/yyyy)

Country

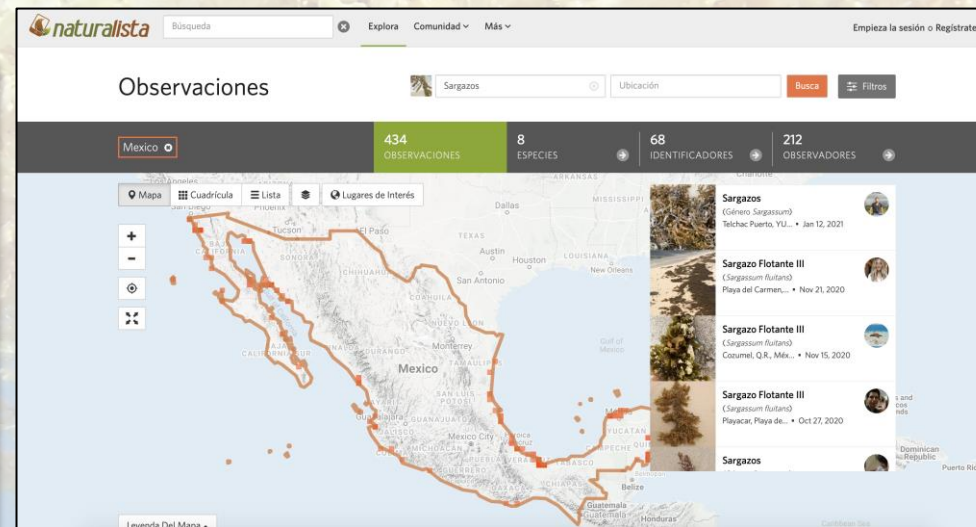
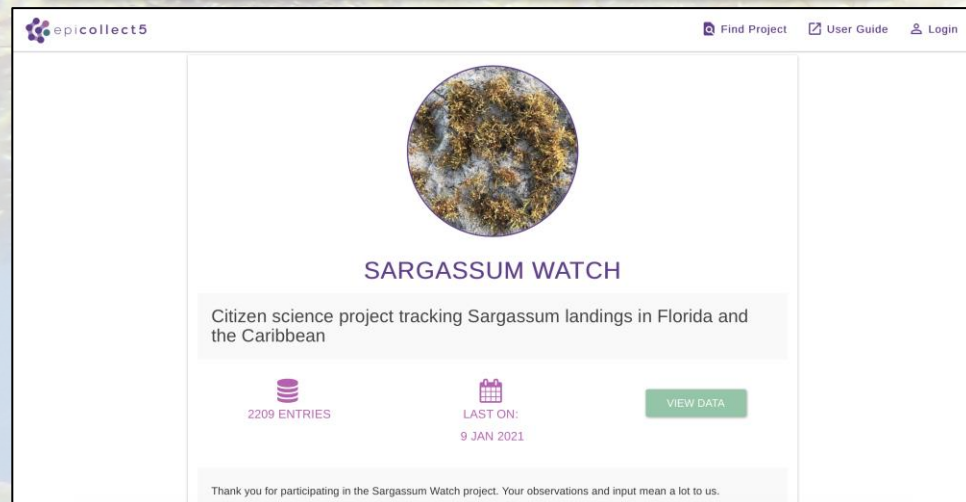
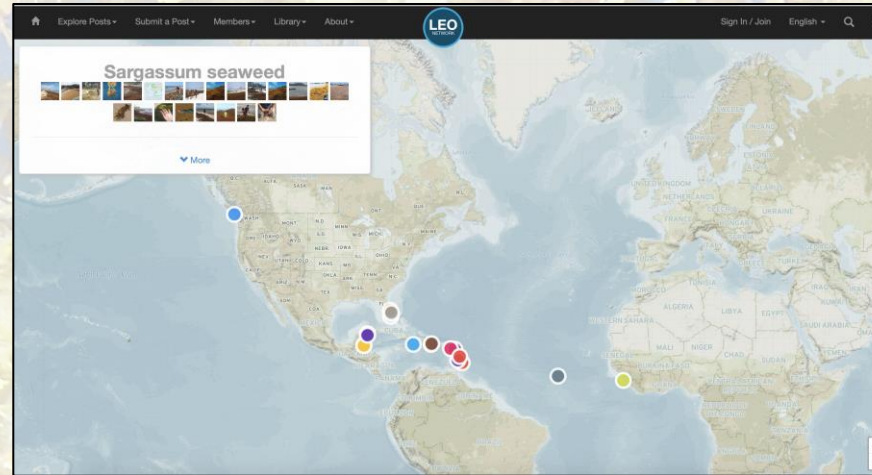
Latitude (if available)

Longitude (if available)

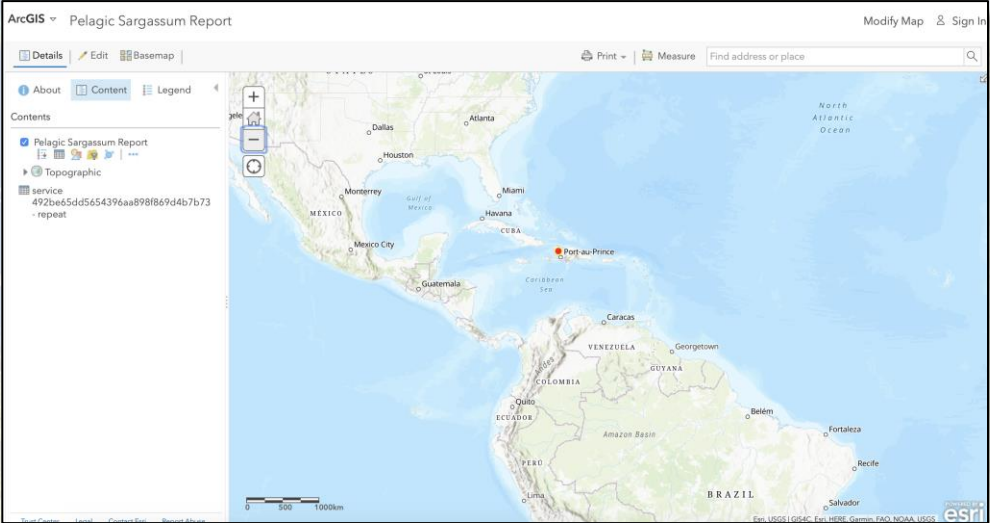
Description of location (Be as specific as possible. A distance and bearing to a well-known location are helpful.)

Photo by GCRL

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Sargassum Monitoring

Impacted Beaches & much more about Sargassum seaweeds!

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2021 Sargassum - Sargasses - Sarga-ZO

Spread the love

Sargassum Monitoring© invented the maps of the areas impacted by sargassum in 2018, in just two years we've had more than 2 million visitors!

Our maps are unique because:
- they are the only ones that cover ALL the countries impacted by sargassum.

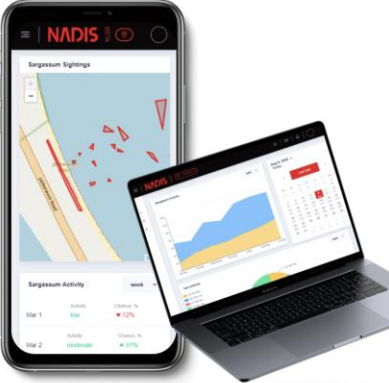
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- Facts First: Explaining Sargassum November 16, 2019
- Sargassum for dummies! May 31, 2019
- Sargassum "Yellowstone Moment" creating an obsession

Solutions


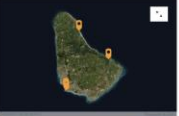


Sargassum Alerts and Monitoring

Satellite Imagery and Remote Sensing powers a modern Dashboard and App for users to receive Alerts of incoming Sargassum in their area. As well as visualize data and analytics.

The Rapid Sargassum Survey Protocol


Guided by a weekly schedule, island forecasts and sometimes word-of-mouth, our team of scientists regularly embarks on fieldwork at one of several sargassum beaching sites across Barbados. The center piece of our fieldwork these days is the development of a rapid Sargassum Monitoring Protocol, using an unmanned aerial vehicle (more simply called a 'drone'). Once the protocol is refined, the volume of the seaweed ashore could be estimated by a quick drone flight taking a matter of minutes - thus eliminating the need for arduous hours of fieldwork assessment.



The beaching sites where fieldwork takes place - Sargassum Lovers and Coconut Bay on the east coast, and Caribbe Bay and Devil Hill on the south-west coast.

SARGNET Listserv & Slack Workspace

<https://listserv.fiu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=SARGNET&A=1>

SargNet 

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Shelly-Ann Cox you

+ Add teammates


general Company-wide announcements and work-based matters 

v=zGXOrXjut2l


YouTube

The Ocean Cleaner

The Ocean Cleaner - harvesting sargassum seaweeds











The Ocean Cleaner harvesting sargassum seaweeds with the Sargaboat® and Sargatrailer® along Sargabarriers® on the Riviera Maya.




July 25th, 2019

Message #general


**B***I*

Aa @ ☺ ☹

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The Sargassum Podcast



A podcast hosted by marine educators and scientists with a range of expertise in Sargassum and Coastal Communities. The podcasts interviews a variety of stakeholders such as scientists, entrepreneurs, resource managers, community leaders, government officials, artists, fishermen, people working in the tourism sector etc. about how they experience Sargassum, a floating algae that has caused severe problems when beaching in the wider Caribbean and West Africa. Each interviewee will their solutions or new knowledge concerning how they deal with Sargassum. The podcasts enables a reciprocal knowledge exchange between experts and local communities and between different local communities. We hope to be platform for exchange of ideas across regions and to catalyze local solutions to this international problem.

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Podcast



Episode 52
ACCIÓN CIUDADANA DE SARGAZO
EN COSTA RICA

Host: Roberto Rojas
Guest: Jose Ugalde

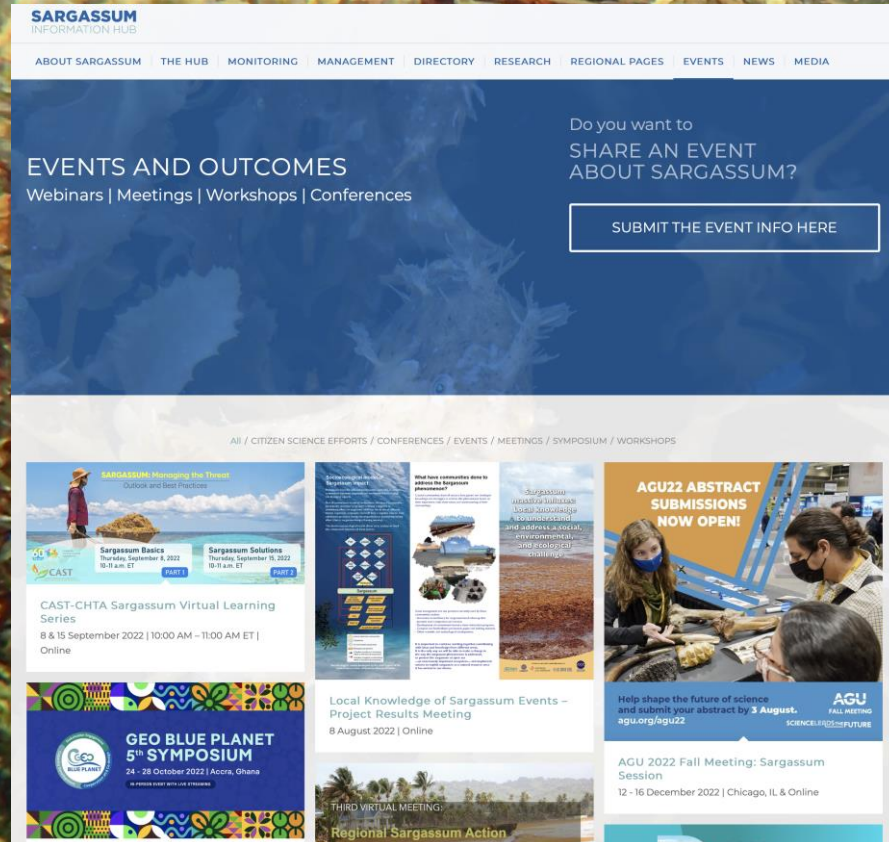
E52: Acción ciudadana de Sargazo en Costa Rica

Aug 11 · The Sargassum Podcast

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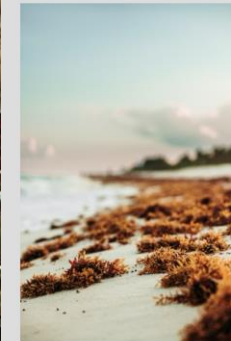
- SARGASSUM Managing the Threat**
Outlook and Best Practices
- Sargassum Basics**
Thursday, September 8, 2022
10:00 AM ET
- Sargassum Solutions**
Thursday, September 8, 2022
10:00 AM ET
- CAST-CHTA Sargassum Virtual Learning Series**
8 & 15 September 2022 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM ET | Online
- Local Knowledge of Sargassum Events – Project Results Meeting**
8 August 2022 | Online
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9 November 2022: GCFI75 – Fort Walton – Destin, Florida



Living With Sargassum: Current Scientific Perspectives And Future Outlook For Fisheries, Coastal Managers And Entrepreneurs.



Organizers: Global Ocean Institute, World Maritime University, Sweden in association with CERMES, University of West Indies, Barbados, Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute.

For over a decade, influxes of the floating sargassum seaweed to the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico have caused major environmental and socioeconomic problems for fisheries, tourism and coastal communities. In the early years responses were reactive, uncoordinated and inefficient leading to environmental degradation. Millions of dollars were channeled into emergency efforts to deal with the problem, regional coordination, research to understand the problem and innovative ways of using sargassum for commercial purposes. With the realization that sargassum influxes will persist into the foreseeable future, proactive and coordinated management responses across the region are essential. However, as highlighted by the 2021 UNEP white paper on sargassum, it is a complex problem with inevitable trade-offs between clean-ups, harvesting initiatives and environmental impacts. The session will present a current state of understanding, with a

particular emphasis placed on what the future holds and what research will be needed to resolve the key challenges.

Sargassum Reference Repository

RESEARCH INFORMATION

CERMES Sargassum Reference Repository

The Sargassum Reference Repository is a living and constantly growing collection of scientific works related to the biology, impacts and uses of sargassum within the Wider Caribbean Region and beyond.

For each entry in our repository you can view reference metadata (authors, title, date, etc.), and in most cases also its abstract. When an item is from an open source, you can click the URL provided to access it.

The references are organised and searchable based on a predetermined set of tags, listed below.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO EXPLORE THE HUNDREDS OF LISTINGS WE HAVE COMPILED HERE.



UWI – CERMES SARGASSUM REFERENCE REPOSITORY TAGS

Region
Atlantic
Caribbean
Europe

Biology
taxonomy/life history
biodiversity (associated)
growth

Uses
use – agriculture
use – antifouling
use – bioenergy

Management
management – collection
management – governance
management – guidance

<https://sargassumhub.org/research-information/>

<https://bit.ly/SargRefRepository>



The background of the image is a close-up photograph of Sargassum seaweed. It features numerous green, serrated leaves and clusters of small, round, light-green fruits. The seaweed is set against a solid, vibrant blue background. Overlaid on this image is white text in a bold, sans-serif font.

**THE SARGASSUM INFORMATION HUB
SHOULD NOT BE ALIEN TO
CULTURAL AND LOCAL CONTEXTS**

MEXICO

Since 2011, the Mexican Caribbean has periodically received atypical influxes of floating Sargassum. In 2015 and 2018 major events were experienced along the coasts of the Quintana Roo State. In 2018 Sargassum reached volumes of up to 2 m⁻³ per linear meter of beach and this led to a declaration of emergency from the State. These atypical massive influxes have entailed severe impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems and their ecosystem services (e.g., beach erosion, water pollution, decreasing tourism, death of seagrasses, loss of corals, etc.). In Mexico, most governmental efforts have focused on cleaning the beaches of tourist importance, although this is starting to change. There have been several initiatives to start harvesting Sargassum at sea and using it as a resource. This would prevent most of the negative impacts associated with the Sargassum decomposing process that starts at shallow water and on the beach. It is a goal for the country to stop managing Sargassum as a problem and start managing it as a national resource.



[Ver mapa más grande](#)



**IT IS NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR THE
SARGASSUM INFORMATION HUB
TO BE BEAUTIFULLY PASSIVE**

Shifting mindsets



Future developments of the Hub

- Incorporation of disability friendly features to facilitate wider access
- Dashboards to illustrate statistics on the impacts of sargassum influxes, volumes, clean up costs etc
- The integration of a RSS feed crawler to assist in populating the Events and News web pages
- Feature summaries of sargassum publications and book reviews
- Integrating an online forum to connect people with similar interests
- Job advertisements for sargassum related projects
- Features on sargassum innovations and the use of digital technologies in building sustainable sargassum value chains
- Delivering online courses on sargassum management and valorisation

Moonshot Ideas

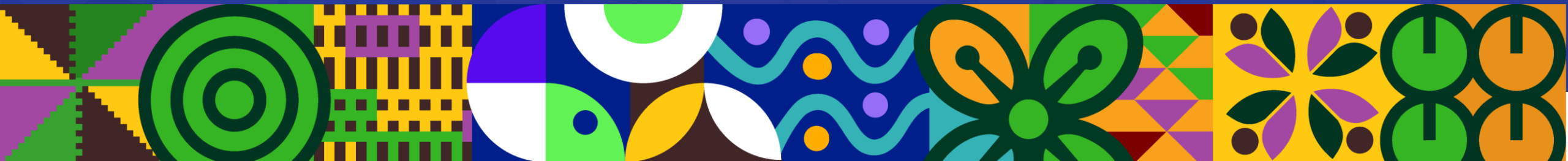
- Launching a virtual sargassum art gallery and promote the use of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT) to sell/trade digital art,
- Developing a Computerised Decision Support System that incorporates monitoring, forecasting, and sargassum hazard and exposure data,
- Hosting a Sargassum Tournament to promote the use of simulation adaptation frameworks in response planning, and
- Launching an online Sargassum Store that sells certified sargassum products produced by various companies.

5th Symposium | Accra, Ghana | 24 – 28 October 2022



The Sargassum Information Hub

<https://sargassumhub.org>





Thank You.
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