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# Record-Breaking Sargassum Levels Threaten Caribbean Coastlines

**The University of South Florida reports unprecedented levels of Sargassum algae in the Caribbean Sea and west Atlantic Ocean, surpassing the previous 2022 record and warning islands of increased inundation throughout May 2025.**

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Islands in the Caribbean Sea must prepare for a continued influx of Sargassum this month, in the face of record high levels recorded in the eastern Caribbean Sea and west Atlantic, according to a recent report by the Optical Oceanography Lab in the University of South Florida.

The Outlook of 2025 Sargassum blooms, issued at the end of April, notes the total amount of Sargassum in that month was twice as much in the eastern Caribbean Sea and west Atlantic Ocean

as the previous historical record for April. The total amount also exceeded the all-time high, recorded in June 2022, establishing 2025 as the new record year. “The exact reasons behind these new historical records need to be investigated,” said the team of USF researchers.

The outlook for May is one with continued increases in Sargassum levels, the report says. “Sargassum inundation will continue to occur in most of the Caribbean nations and islands as well as along the southeast coast of Florida,” it anticipates.

In 2022, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources estimated that it would cost \$25,000 each day to remove the Sargassum that was piling up on beaches and shorelines across the territory.

The volume of the fast-growing algae was so great that booms placed in the Red Hook area to prevent the Sargassum from reaching the shore collapsed under the weight of the seaweed, DPNR Commissioner Jean Pierre Oriol told lawmakers during a July 2022 Senate hearing.

Apart from being unsightly, decaying Sargassum left to rot on beaches produces hydrogen sulfide, a corrosive, flammable gas with a tell-tale “rotten egg” odor. High concentrations of this chemical can peel the paint off metal and cause respiratory distress to those who inhale it.

According to the predictions made by the 2025 Sargassum outlook, the territory will have to quickly come up with a management plan to effectively deal with the public nuisance.