Outlook of 2019 *Sargassum* blooms in the Caribbean Sea*

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In 2018, the Caribbean Sea (CS) has experienced a record-high and prolonged *Sargassum* bloom. The maps below show *Sargassum* abundance, with warm colors representing high abundance. In Jan 2019, similar blooms as in Jan 2018 appeared in the CS and the Central West Atlantic (CWA). In the following months, it is likely that the CWA *Sargassum* will continue to be transported to the CS through the entire Lesser Antilles islands, especially from Guadeloupe to Trinidad. Indeed, significant Sargassum beaching has been reported in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Barbados. Sargassum beaching along the SE coast of Florida has also been reported, apparently originated from the Caribbean. While it is too early to predict the bloom situation in summer 2019, if the growth conditions in the Atlantic are favorable in the next months, it is likely that 2019 may be another major bloom year (similar to 2018) for the CS.

Wang, M., and C. Hu (2017), Predicting Sargassum blooms in the Caribbean Sea from MODIS observations, Geophys. Res. Lett., 44, 3265–3273, doi:10.1002/ 2017GL072932.