



NOAA
SOUTHEAST
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***Sargassum* Inundation Events (SIE) Addendum for the Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean**



Sargassum (a brown algae), floating in dense mats along the surface of the ocean, serves as an important habitat for wildlife and fisheries resources. Image credit: NOAA

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[Access the current version of the disaster guide using this link \(March 2022\)](#)

***Sargassum* Overview**

According to NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS), “*Sargassum* is a type of floating brown algae that provides food, protection, and habitat for many marine species” and has historically been abundant in the Sargasso Sea, located in the western North Atlantic Ocean. It provides habitat, food resources, and breeding grounds to many species of marine organisms and is an essential part of the pelagic ecosystem. *Sargassum* is also abundant in the Gulf of Mexico and found in the Caribbean Sea (Gower & King, 2011; Wang & Hu, 2018). In 2011, a second aggregation developed called the “Great Atlantic *Sargassum* Belt” extending from West Africa to the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico (Hu et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2019). Potential factors for this aggregation include a shift in global wind patterns, excess discharge from the Amazon River, and an increase in sea surface temperatures (Sissini et al., 2017; Oviatt et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019; Johns et al., 2020).

Sargassum can form “blooms”, or large mats of *Sargassum* that are often transported west by wind and ocean currents into the Caribbean Sea, tropical South Atlantic, and Gulf of Mexico waters. These blooms can cause *Sargassum* Inundation Events (SIEs), similar to harmful algal blooms (i.e., red tides) along Southeast and Caribbean beaches, where they can pose significant problems to the coastal communities. *Sargassum* in the open ocean is closely monitored and tracked, however, beaching events of *Sargassum* have been hard to predict. This makes it difficult for coastal communities to prepare, leaving many people and wildlife vulnerable to the harmful effects of SIEs, including impediment to beach-nesting wildlife, exposure to toxins as it decays on the beach, clogged fishing gear, and negative impacts to coastal tourism.

In August 2022, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declared a [federal emergency](#) in response to an unusually large *Sargassum* influx affecting the Caribbean. In particular, the U.S. Virgin Islands' water supply was plagued by *Sargassum*, leading to contaminated drinking water and causing a shortage on the island of St. Croix. This declaration was historic, marking the first time an emergency had ever been declared in response to *Sargassum*. NOAA was thereby requested to provide scientific support to FEMA and to develop long term action plans to address the issue with stakeholders, should it arise again. NOAA also coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) who provided additional risk assessments for protected species.

Many communities within the Southeast and Caribbean region report *Sargassum* blooms during the spring and summer seasons. The *Sargassum* “peak” season is from May to July. In March 2023, the [Satellite-based *Sargassum* Watch System](#) of the University of South Florida estimated the amount of *Sargassum* recorded for that month was at an all-time high of approximately 13 million tons, garnering widespread media attention ([University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab, March 2023](#)). It was presumed that *Sargassum* was going to continue to increase in the West Atlantic, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico, ultimately leading to major SIEs. There were numerous news and media outlets that featured the story of the massive “blob” headed toward Florida, warning their audiences of an expected *Sargassum* disaster. Fortunately, the 2023 *Sargassum* peak season did not reach the estimated high biomass levels predicted for Florida. The media coverage of *Sargassum* had portrayed it as a major threat to shorelines, causing unnecessary alarm among coastal communities. However, in that year, the southern Caribbean did see a significant amount of *Sargassum* along their shorelines, with NOAA's

Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) [Sargassum Inundation Report](#) delineating a *high risk* for the region.

The purpose of the following addendum is to provide background and contextual information on NOAA programs and resources that can be leveraged during an emergency response to SIEs. The aim is to provide NOAA contact information and resources for other federal agencies and the public in the event of an emergency relating to *Sargassum*. This document provides information on federal jurisdictions, NOAA programs, and regional Fishery Management Councils to contact for emergency response and consultations.



Figure 1: This infographic illustrates the movement of *Sargassum* from sea to shore. Out at sea, *Sargassum* provides important fish and wildlife habitat. However, this free-floating algae often washes ashore in great quantities due to strong wind and water currents. Masses of this algae beaching on shore can harm coastal ecosystems, drive away tourists, and pose public health threats. NOAA is working to help coastal communities address the growing problem of what experts call "*Sargassum* inundation events." Credit: [NOAA National Ocean Service](#).

Federal Mandates for *Sargassum*

The following mandates contain information that can pertain to *Sargassum* and should be considered and referenced to direct users towards the correct contact. *Sargassum* jurisdictions often overlap between different agencies and offices due to its wide-spread distribution and

localization in the high seas. Recently, NOAA conducted a “*Nearshore Sargassum Management: Policy Analysis and Agency Gaps Assessment*” that identifies areas where NOAA could improve its internal coordination and management among the agency (Vital et al., 2024). Please refer to Vital et al., (2024) for more detailed information on Federal Mandates and policies about *Sargassum* management.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The ESA provides protection for species that are endangered or threatened throughout the areas they occupy. *Critical habitat* is defined under section 3(5)(a) as specific areas occupied by species at the time it is listed that contain physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of endangered or threatened species and which may require special management considerations. It also includes specific areas outside the geographic area occupied by the species at the time it is listed that are essential to the conservation of the species. *Sargassum* is an essential feature of critical habitat that was designated in 2014 for the Northwest Atlantic Distinct Population Segment (DPS) loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*). ESA Section 7 requires federal agencies to consult with either the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) or the USFWS to ensure that federal actions authorized, funded, or carried out, will not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitats. NMFS will provide a written response of the procedures that should be followed before any actions related to a harmful *Sargassum* event involving an endangered species or critical habitat can be taken.

Natural Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP)

This contingency plan provides procedures outlined by the federal government to respond to the discharge of oil and release of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. The NCP requires NOAA to provide scientific support in events involving any of the above.

Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABHRCA)

The HABHRCA requires NOAA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to advance the understanding and management of harmful algal blooms (HAB) and hypoxic events within U.S. waters. Additionally, the agencies are to maintain a national program to understand, detect, predict, control, mitigate, and respond to marine and freshwater HAB and hypoxia events, including providing scientific assessment and strategic plans to address HABs and hypoxia.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act (MSA); Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

The MSA was established to improve the nation’s fisheries management laws with the following objectives: preventing overfishing, rebuilding overfished stocks, increasing long-term economic and social benefits, ensuring a safe and sustainable supply of seafood and protecting habitat that fish need to spawn, breed, feed, and grow to maturity. Under the MSA, eight Fishery Management Councils (FMCs) were established in the United States, each required to create Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) that adhere to the Ten National Standards, which are described on [NOAA’s NMFS website](#). In addition to establishing these councils, the MSA established Essential Fish Habitats (EFH) that each council must manage in their respective

federal waters. According to NOAA’s “*Nearshore Sargassum Management: Policy Analysis and Agency Gaps Assessment*” (Vital et al., 2024):

The MSA requires fishery management councils (FMCs) and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to designate Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for species managed through fishery management plans (FMPs). An EFH is defined as waters and substrate necessary for fish spawning, breeding, feeding, and growth (16 U.S.C. § 1802 (10); 50 C.F.R. 600.10). Additionally, the Councils and NMFS designate subsets of EFH to prioritize called Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPC) (16 U.S.C. 1853 Sec. 303(a)(7)). These are designated based on ecological importance, susceptibility to human impact, stress from development, probability of human degradation, and rarity of habitat. It is important to note that EFH designations for pelagic *Sargassum* within FMPs do not prohibit harvest of *Sargassum*; it simply triggers EFH NMFS consultations if an agency action will “adversely affect” EFH. (16 U.S.C 1855 Sec 305(b)).

Relevant to the Southeast and Caribbean, there are two regional FMCs: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) and Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC). Each Council has established FMPs relevant to their regions that address how they manage *Sargassum* in their waters. More information can be found in the Fishery Management Councils section below. A more detailed breakdown of the MSA in relation to *Sargassum* can also be found in NOAA’s “*Nearshore Sargassum Management: Policy Analysis and Agency Gaps Assessment*” (Vital et al., 2024)

Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (The Stafford Act)

The Stafford Act provides a means of federal assistance to local and state governments to effectively alleviate suffering and damage as a result from natural disasters. NOAA is to provide support during an emergency by providing preparedness activities, issuing warnings, performing essential community services, and providing technical and advisory assistance. NOAA has maintained a partnership with FEMA, the coordinating agency for federal disaster declarations.

Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)

The CZMA establishes a voluntary partnership between the federal government and coastal states and territories to implement the national goals of maintaining, protecting, restoring, and developing the nation’s coastal communities and resources. Coastal areas that are prone to sea level rise, land subsidence, destruction of natural protective features, and natural disasters may be subject to federal protection in case of such events.

Southeast and Caribbean Regional Contacts

In a *Sargassum* Inundation Event (SIE), NOAA and the regional FMCs have multiple services available to provide support based on federal jurisdictions and resources impacted by an event. Beyond providing a brief background of relevant offices and programs, this section has the best points-of-contact (POCs) for those offices. This section is organized by descriptions of each

NOAA program and their capabilities regarding *Sargassum* followed by Tables 2 and 3 with contact information.

If you are looking for Sargassum resources or contacts within the Southeast and Caribbean region, which encompasses North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, that may be missing from this addendum, please reach out to the Southeast and Caribbean Regional Coordinator at region.secarib@noaa.gov. The Regional Coordinator's goal is to connect NOAA personnel and partners to address regional issues, and is a good resource if you need contact information or connections in the region.

NOAA Offices

National Ocean Service (NOS)

The NOS mission is to provide science-based solutions through collaborative partnerships to address evolving economic, environmental, and social pressures on our Great Lakes, ocean and coasts. There are various programmatic offices that may be able to assist with *Sargassum* resources.

Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R)

This program is tasked with responding to oil spills, chemical accidents, and other emergencies in coastal areas. In regards to *Sargassum* events, there are several services they can offer.

Emergency Response Division (ERD)

Should be contacted when significant weather events have occurred and/or when there is risk of oil or hazardous material being released in coastal or inland waterways.

Assessment and Restoration Division (ARD)

Has expertise in aquatic risk assessment techniques, contaminated sediment issues, and data interpretation.

Disaster Preparedness Program (DPP)

Leads incident coordination within NOS during emergency response. Supports NOS and partner preparedness for disaster response and recovery.

National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)

Under the authority of the HABHRCA, NOAA has the authority to research, forecast, and identify best management practices for *Sargassum*. The HAB Event Response Program provides immediate support to help state, tribal, and local officials manage events and advance the understanding of HABs as they occur. Depending on need, the program may support or provide access to toxin analysis, data collection, training, technical assistance, and ship-based sampling. Modest funding is available to help defray the costs of immediate mobilization of response efforts. Support may be requested via the

contact information in Table 2. You can find more information on NCCOS HAB response capabilities by following this link:

- <https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/response-and-readiness/>

Office for Coastal Management (OCM)

OCM should be contacted for anyone who wishes to obtain assessments on impacts to coral, mangrove, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), dunes, and other coastal resources after an event.

Stewardship Division

The Stewardship Division of OCM has a Coastal Communities Program that is charged with overseeing the National Coastal Zone Management Program. The states and territories within the Southeast and Caribbean regions have developed federally approved coastal management plans that make them eligible for federal CZMA funding. This includes projects that involve planning, regulating, and acquisition activities to mitigate coastal hazards and enhance resilience.

U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)

The IOOS Regional Associations with resources on *Sargassum* include:

- Caribbean Coastal Ocean Observing System (CARICOOS): Produces an information bulletin that is meant to provide a general outlook of current *Sargassum* bloom conditions and future bloom probability for the Caribbean Sea: <https://www.caricoos.org/sargassum>
- Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA): Provides resources for Florida and Georgia: <https://secoora.org/harmful-algal-bloom-resources/>
- Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS): Develops models that can support response and mitigation for *Sargassum* inundation events in the Southeast Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico: <https://gcoos.org/sargassum-forecasting/>

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

NOAA Fisheries, formally known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is responsible for the management of marine resources and thereby responsible for managing and establishing Essential Fish Habitats (EFH). This provision of the MSA requires federal agencies that authorize, fund, or undertake projects that may adversely affect EFH to consult with NMFS.

Southeast Regional Office (SERO)

NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office (SERO) is headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida. The Southeast Region covers nearly 20,000 miles of tidal coastline throughout the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. This includes the eight coastal states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas; the inland watershed states of Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Tennessee; and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). This office focuses on three main programs:

Sustainable Fisheries, Habitat Conservation, and Protected Resources. SERO has created a list of their most frequently contacted numbers that could be helpful for *Sargassum* events, which can be found by following this link:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/about-us/noaa-fisheries-southeast-regional-office-contact-list>

Protected Resources Division (PRD)

This Division is responsible for the conservation, protection, and recovery of marine mammals and endangered and threatened species and may implement regulatory requirements. More information can be found at this website:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast/protected-marine-life>

Habitat Conservation Division (HCD)

This Division has field offices located throughout the southeastern U.S. including USVI and Puerto Rico, which can also provide localized knowledge and expertise. Its habitat protection program provides technical advice and recommendations for minimizing the effects of activities on habitats necessary for federally managed resources, focusing on the coastal states from North Carolina through Texas, extending to Puerto Rico and USVI. More information can be found at this website:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast#habitat>

Sustainable Fisheries Division (SFD)

This Division works with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council to manage species in federal waters of the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and the U.S. Caribbean under the MSA. SFD works with the three Councils to develop amendments to fishery management plans (FMP) and implements fishery regulations after amendments are approved by the Secretary of Commerce. SFD monitors catches and closes harvest for species when quotas are met or expected to be met. More information can be found at this website:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast/fisheries>

National Environmental Satellite and Data Information Service (NESDIS)

The NESDIS mission is to provide secure and timely access to global environmental data and information from satellites and other sources to promote and protect the nation's security, environment, economy, and quality of life.

NESDIS should be contacted for supporting data resources, including satellite imagery and long term ocean and atmospheric data records, which frame the discussions for emergency response and forecasting.

Fishery Management Councils

As described in the above MSA section, the FMC's main functions are to manage fishery resources and develop FMPs for their region. These actions are intended to protect, restore, and promote the long-term sustainable health of U.S. fisheries resources through a transparent, collaborative process with a diverse group of stakeholders. In Table 1, each FMC and the respective species managed are listed. For a more detailed description of each council and how they manage *Sargassum*, refer to NOAA's "*Nearshore Sargassum Management: Policy Analysis and Agency Gaps Assessment*" (Vital et al., 2024).

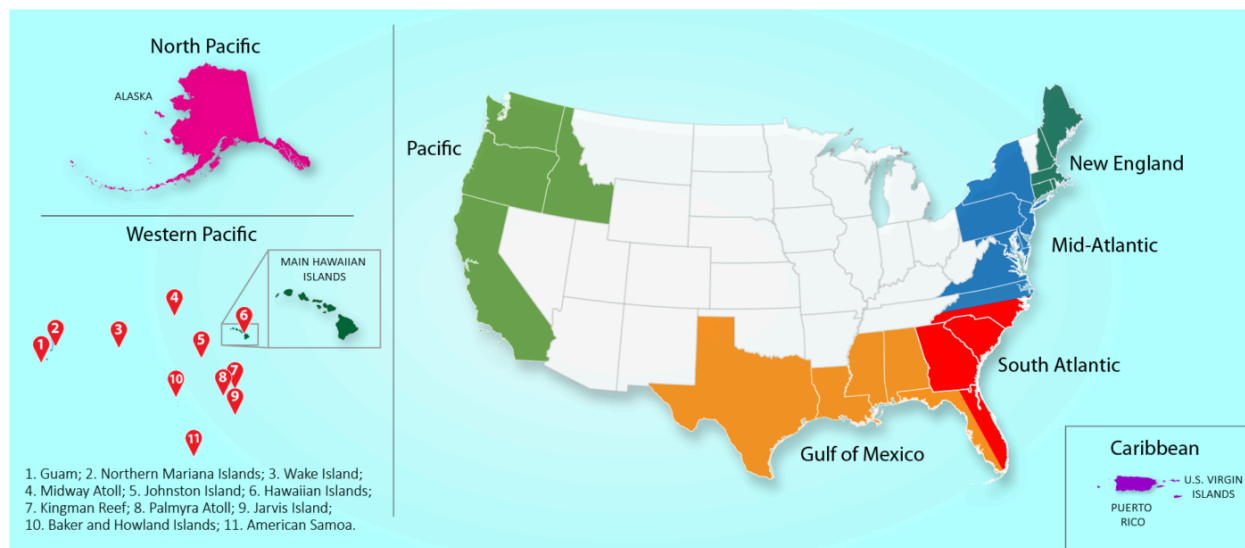


Figure 2: The eight Fishery Management Councils (FMCs) and their respective regions.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)

The SAFMC oversees conservation and management of fisheries resources from North Carolina to east Florida through to the Florida Keys. *Sargassum* is listed as an EFH for many SAFMC managed species (Table 1). The SAFMC also designated *Sargassum* as an EFH Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) for coastal migratory fish species from the Gulf Stream shoreward. This requires agencies to consult with NMFS if an agency action may “adversely affect” the EFH by impacting the quality or quantity of the EFH (16 U.S.C. 1855 § 305; 104-297(b)(2)). In 2002, the SAFMC established an FMP specifically for *Sargassum* which protects two *Sargassum* species (*S. fluitans* and *S. natans*) from excessive harvest.

Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC)

The CFMC is responsible for the management of fishery resources in federal waters around the USVI and Puerto Rico. Rather than creating a region-wide plan, the CFMC has broken down its plans into three areas (Puerto Rico, St. Thomas and St. John, and St. Croix) to allow for better management of each island's resources and improved stakeholder engagement. The EFH currently listed includes: salt marshes, seagrass, algae flats, estuarine and marine water column, mangrove wetlands, live/hard bottoms, sand/shell substrates, *Sargassum*, and coral and coral reefs. *Sargassum* is included as an EFH for various species managed from the mean high water

line to the outer boundary of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). *Sargassum* substrates are EFH for larvae only. There is no FMP for *Sargassum* in the U.S Caribbean.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC)

The Gulf of Mexico region is outside the scope of this document but NOAA’s “*Nearshore Sargassum Management: Policy Analysis and Agency Gaps Assessment*” (Vital et al., 2024) details the management of *Sargassum* in the Gulf of Mexico.

Table 1: The FMCs in the Southeast and Caribbean. This table lists respective species that are managed under each FMPs, the boundary for those species and for which species *Sargassum* is an EFH substrate (NOAA’s “*Nearshore Sargassum Management: Policy Analysis and Agency Gaps Assessment*”, Vital et al., 2024).

Fishery Management Council	Fishery Management Plan	Boundary (nautical miles offshore)	<i>Sargassum</i> substrate as Essential Fish Habitat
Southeast Atlantic (SAFMC)	Coastal Migratory Pelagic, coral and live bottom habitat, dolphin and wahoo, golden crab, <i>Sargassum</i> , shrimp, snapper grouper complex.	3 - 200	Greater amberjack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, almaco jack, dolphin, wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagic species
Gulf of Mexico (GMFMC)	None list <i>Sargassum</i>	State water boundary - 200	King mackerel, greater amberjack, almaco jack, banded rudderfish, and grey triggerfish
Puerto Rico (CMFC)	Spiny lobster, queen conch, 63 species of fish, all species of corals, sea urchins, and sea cucumbers.	9	Gray triggerfish, little tunny, blackfin tuna, king mackerel, cero mackerel, wahoo, dolphin, barracuda, tripletail
St. Thomas and St. John (CMFC)	Spiny lobster, queen conch, 47 species of fish, and all species of corals, sea urchins, and sea cucumbers.	3	Dolphin and wahoo
St. Croix (CMFC)	Spiny lobster, queen conch, 43 species of fish, and all species of corals, sea urchins, and sea cucumbers.	3	Dolphin and wahoo

Table 2: NOAA Offices and Points-of-Contact for *Sargassum* Inundation Events

NOAA Line Office	Program within the Line Office	Point(s)-of-Contact
National Ocean Service (NOS)	Office of Response and Restoration Emergency Response Division	Scientific Support Coordinator for Southeast and Caribbean: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brad Benggio - brad.benggio@noaa.gov
National Ocean Service (NOS)	Office of Response and Restoration Assessment and	Supervisory Environmental Scientist for Southeast & Gulf of Mexico Branch:

NOAA Line Office	Program within the Line Office	Point(s)-of-Contact
	Restoration Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kevin Kirsch - kevin.kirsch@noaa.gov
National Ocean Service (NOS)	Office of Response and Restoration Disaster Preparedness Program	Chief: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kate Wheelock - kate.wheelock@noaa.gov Southeast and Caribbean Regional Preparedness Coordinator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allyssa Zebrowski - allyssa.zebrowski@noaa.gov
National Ocean Service (NOS)	National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science	HAB Event Response Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nccos.hab.event.response@noaa.gov
National Ocean Service (NOS)	Office for Coastal Management	South Regional Director (includes Southeast, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean regions): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heidi Stiller - heidi.stiller@noaa.gov Southeast and Caribbean Regional Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aranzazu Lascurain - aranzazu.lascurain@noaa.gov Science and Geospatial Services Division Chief: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicholas Schmidt - nicholas.schmidt@noaa.gov
National Ocean Service (NOS)	Office for Coastal Management Stewardship Division Coastal Communities Program	Coastal Communities Program Manager: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laura Petes - laura.petes@noaa.gov
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Southeast Regional Office	General Inquiries for Endangered Species and Essential Fish Habitat Consultations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nmfs.ser.emergency.consult@noaa.gov 727-842-5312 (only staffed during business hours) 727-824-5320 (on-call phone) Regional Administrator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andy Strelcheck - andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Southeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division Endangered Species Branch	Natural Resource Specialist (North Carolina to Texas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joe Cavanaugh - joseph.cavanaugh@noaa.gov

NOAA Line Office	Program within the Line Office	Point(s)-of-Contact
		Natural Resource Specialist (Florida Keys and the Caribbean) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Melissa Alvarez - melissa.alvarez@noaa.gov
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Southeast Regional Office Habitat Conservation Division	Supervisory Fish & Wildlife Administrator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Virginia Croom - virginia.croom@noaa.gov Essential Fish Habitat Coordinator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● David Dale - david.dale@noaa.gov Gulf of Mexico Branch Supervisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rusty Swafford - rusty.swafford@noaa.gov South Atlantic/Caribbean Branch Supervisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pace Wilber - pace.wilber@noaa.gov
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Southeast Regional Office Sustainable Fisheries	Supervisory Economist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mike Travis - mike.travis@noaa.gov
Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS)	Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) and the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic OceanWatch (CGoMA) of the NOAA CoastWatch program * <i>(a.k.a. "CoastWatch" in NESDIS Center for Satellite Applications and Research)</i> <i>*CGoMA is a Regional Node of the CoastWatch Program that is housed under NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)</i>	Federal Node Manager of the CGoMA of CoastWatch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gregory Foltz- gregory.foltz@noaa.gov CGoMA remote sensing scientist and operations manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Joaquin Trinanes- joaquin.trinanes@noaa.gov NOAA CoastWatch Program Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Veronica Lance- veronica.lance@noaa.gov
National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS)	National Centers for Environmental Information	Regional Climate Services Director <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharon Mesick- sharon.mesick@noaa.gov Marine Ecosystems Section Chief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kirsten Larsen - kirsten.larsen@noaa.gov

Table 3: Fishery Management Councils Points-of-Contact for *Sargassum* Events

Fishery Management Council	Area of Responsibility	Points of Contact
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)	North Carolina to east Florida and Key West	Main Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 843-571-4366 Habitat & Ecosystem Scientist/ <i>Sargassum</i> Contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathleen Howington - kathleen.howington@safmc.net
Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC)	Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands	Main Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 787-766-5926 Fisheries Management Plans & Habitat Specialist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graciela García-Moliner - graciela_cfmc@yahoo.com OR graciela.garcia-moliner@noaa.gov

Supporting Material

Nearshore *Sargassum* Management: Policy Analysis and Agency Gaps Assessment

- <https://doi.org/10.25923/jr7f-3n87>

Sargassum Inundation Report for South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Regions:

- <https://cwcgom.aoml.noaa.gov/SIR/>

Satellite Based Watch System (SaWS) for the Caribbean:

- <https://optics.marine.usf.edu/projects/SaWS.html>

NOAA CoastWatch - AOML:

- <https://cwcgom.aoml.noaa.gov/SIR/>

NOAA HCD - *Sargassum* and EFH:

- https://www.caribbeanfmc.com/Briefing_Books/176th_Meeting/Sargassum_EFH_Presentation.pdf

NOAA Fisheries Southeast:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>
- [South Atlantic Fishery Management Council](#)

NMFS Southeast Regional Office:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/about/southeast-regional-office>

NMFS Southeast Region Habitat Conservation Division:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/about/southeast-regional-office>

- Essential Fish Habitat Consultations, Southeast Region:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/consultations/essential-fish-habitat-consultation-s-southeast>
- Essential Fish Habitat in the U.S. Caribbean:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/content/essential-fish-habitat-us-caribbean>

NOAA CoastWatch: FEMA Declared Emergency for USVI

- <https://oceanwatch.noaa.gov/cwn/news/2022-08-08/atlantic-oceanwatch-assisting-fema-sargassum-reaches-record-levels-caribbean.html>

OR&R Supporting Response to *Sargassum* in St. Croix, USVI:

- <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/orr-supporting-response-sargassum-st-croix-us-virgin-islands>

OR&R Guidance for Spill Responses Involving *Sargassum*

- <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/oil-and-chemical-spills/oil-spills/oil-spills-and-pelagic-sargassum>
- [Oil Spills and Pelagic *Sargassum*: Planning and Response Considerations](#)

NCEI Harmful Algal Blooms Observing System

- <https://habsos.noaa.gov>

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<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aay0989>

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