

The Spread Of Sargassum Seaweed

In recent years Sargassum has increasingly been seen as a pest, washing up in vast quantities on beaches on both sides of the Atlantic. There are two species of Sargassum involved in this phenomenon - *Sargassum natans* and *Sargassum fluitans*. They are both examples of the free-floating variety that characteristically form the large algal rafts found in the Sargasso Sea.

Something happened in 2011 to produce an ocean-wide explosion of Sargassum that stretched from the Caribbean to the coast of Africa. Unprecedented quantities of seaweed came ashore on coastlines on both sides of the Atlantic. Previously there had been sporadic episodes of the seaweed washing up on beaches, but nothing before on this scale...

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