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## it's sargassum season on miami beach

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it's sargassum season on miami beach: [efforts underway to minimize impact on beachgoers](#)

Sargassum, the brownish seaweed with berrylike air sacs, has returned to Miami Beach. In an advisory, the City reminds us this is a natural occurrence but indicated it is coordinating with the County "to do everything possible to minimize inconvenience to our residents and visitors."

"The seaweed, which is abundant this time of year in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, is not dangerous, but can cause skin irritation from the tiny sea creatures that live in it," the notice said. The months of highest concentration in Miami Beach are between March and October.

"Aside from a minor inconvenience to beachgoers, seaweed provides an important habitat for many species of animals, including juvenile turtles, fish, crabs and migratory birds," the City notes. "We want to assure you that we are making every effort to protect nesting and hatchling sea turtles prior to any heavy equipment being operated on the beach since sea turtle nesting seasons runs concurrently with the influx of sargassum." The endangered turtles nest on Miami Beach between April 1 and October 31.

Due to increasing water temperatures, increased nutrients from land run-off, and increasing levels of carbon dioxide, South Florida and the Caribbean have experienced higher than normal levels of sargassum in recent years generating complaints from beachgoers which led to actions to clear the beaches during the summer months of 2019. The seaweed removal continued in 2020 despite the beaches being closed for a few months during the pandemic.

The process to handle the seaweed involves two steps, the first to "turn over" the sargassum that washes ashore and, two, in cases with "exceptionally high volumes," the plan is to "remove excessive amounts." That said, the City notes they "cannot remove it all" so expect to see some of it still on the sand.

*Photo courtesy City of Miami Beach*

tags    sargassum    seaweed