

The Company of Biologists Accessibility Conformance Report

WCAG Edition

(Based on VPAT® Version 2.5Rev)

Name of Product/Version: The Company of Biologists

Report Date: September 2025

Product Description: The Company of Biologists is a not-for-profit publishing organization dedicated to supporting and inspiring the biological community. The organization publishes five specialist peer-reviewed journals: Development, Journal of Cell Science, Journal of Experimental Biology, Disease Models & Mechanisms, and Biology Open. Their website provides access to scientific research articles, journal information, and resources for researchers and the scientific community.

Contact Information: subscriptions@biologists.com

Notes:

Evaluation Methods Used:

This digital product has been evaluated using the W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative's (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 (WCAG 2.2). The evaluation was done using the WCAG 2.2 Success Criteria for Level A and Level AA conformance, and the accessibility standards established in Section 508 of the United States Rehabilitation Act.

A team of accessibility evaluators has assessed the product using the following steps:

- Overall analysis of the product to check compliance with Meaningful Sequence, Keyboard Operability, Color Contrast, Text Reflow and Text Magnification criteria
- Automated testing using Powermapper's Sortsite software (<https://www.powermapper.com/products/sortsite/checks/accessibility-checks/>) which flags non-compliant issues in the code via a full website scan
- Manual verification of the issues found in automated scanning and re-testing using Chrome Lighthouse, keyboard navigation and the Mac OS Voiceover screenreader
- Manual testing of multimedia content to check for compliance with Alternative to Time-Based Media, Captions, and Audio Description criteria

Applicable Standards/Guidelines

This report covers the degree of conformance for the following accessibility standard/guidelines:

Standard/Guideline	Included In Report
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2	Level A (Yes) Level AA (Yes) Level AAA (No)

Terms

The terms used in the Conformance Level information are defined as follows:

- **Supports:** The functionality of the product has at least one method that meets the criterion without known defects or meets with equivalent facilitation.
- **Partially Supports:** Some functionality of the product does not meet the criterion.
- **Does Not Support:** The majority of product functionality does not meet the criterion.
- **Not Applicable:** The criterion is not relevant to the product.
- **Not Evaluated:** The product has not been evaluated against the criterion. This can only be used in WCAG Level AAA criteria.

WCAG 2.2 Report

Note: When reporting on conformance with the WCAG 2.2 Success Criteria, they are scoped for full pages, complete processes, and accessibility-supported ways of using technology as documented in the [WCAG 2.0 Conformance Requirements](#).

Table 1: Success Criteria, Level A

Notes:

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.1.1 Non-text Content (Level A)	Partially Supports	Images use generic placeholder text like "picture" or "spacer" instead of helpful descriptions that explain what the image shows. PDF documents would benefit from meaningful alternative text for their figures and images, with decorative elements properly identified. Additionally, image descriptions that rely only on color (such as "the red button") should include other identifying details to help users who may not see colors clearly. Finally, some text uses special characters that look like regular English letters but may cause screen readers to mispronounce words, making content harder to understand for users relying on these tools.
1.2.1 Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded) (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has integrated video content including documentary videos, movies embedded in articles, and YouTube supplementary material. Video content is directly integrated into full text articles.
1.2.2 Captions (Prerecorded) (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Video content exists including documentaries and research videos which require prerecorded captions for accessibility.
1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded) (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Video content including documentaries and research presentations

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
		exist that may require audio description or media alternatives for accessibility.
1.3.1 Info and Relationships (Level A)	Partially Supports	Ensure that data tables are properly structured so screen readers can understand the relationship between information. This means using appropriate markup to connect data cells with their headers, especially in complex tables with multiple header levels. Make sure all headings contain actual text rather than being left empty and use proper HTML heading tags instead of just styling regular text to look like headings. For tables, identify which cells are headers and mark any tables used purely for layout purposes appropriately. PDF documents need special tagging to work with screen readers, and when emphasizing text, use semantic HTML elements like "strong" rather than just changing the visual appearance with CSS.
1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Academic journal content has complex information structure requiring meaningful reading sequence for proper comprehension.
1.3.3 Sensory Characteristics (Level A)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
1.4.1 Use of Color (Level A)	Partially Supports	Links that are only distinguished by color changes may not be visible to users who have difficulty seeing certain colors or color differences. To ensure all users can identify clickable links, please use additional visual

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
		indicators such as underlines, bold text, or other styling changes that don't rely solely on color.
1.4.2 Audio Control (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site contains audio content from bio-acoustic research and sound recordings that may auto-play, requiring audio control mechanisms.
2.1.1 Keyboard (Level A)	Partially supports	Interactive elements that users can click or activate should include proper ARIA roles to help assistive technologies understand their function. This ensures that screen readers and other accessibility tools can clearly communicate to users what each control does and how to interact with it effectively.
2.1.2 No Keyboard Trap (Level A)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
2.1.4 Character Key Shortcuts (Level A 2.1 and 2.2)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
2.2.1 Timing Adjustable (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has user login and session management which typically involves session timeouts requiring user control.
2.2.2 Pause, Stop, Hide (Level A)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
2.3.1 Three Flashes or Below Threshold (Level A)	Partially supports	Images that flash rapidly can cause seizures or other physical reactions in some users. To keep your content safe for everyone, please ensure that any flashing images or animations don't exceed three flashes per

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
		second. This helps protect users with photosensitive conditions while maintaining an inclusive experience for all visitors.
2.4.1 Bypass Blocks (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Complex academic journal site with multiple navigation elements across journals requires bypass blocks for efficient navigation.
2.4.2 Page Titled (Level A)	Partially Supports	Each page needs a clear, descriptive title that helps users understand what content they're viewing. Currently, some pages are missing titles entirely, others have blank titles, and several pages share identical titles, making it difficult for users to distinguish between different sections of your site. Unique, meaningful page titles are especially important for users navigating with screen readers or managing multiple browser tabs, as these titles help them identify and return to specific content.
2.4.3 Focus Order (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has multiple interactive elements including forms and navigation that require logical focus order for keyboard users.
2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context) (Level A)	Partially Supports	Links throughout the site need clearer identification to help all users understand where they lead. Currently, some links use generic text like "Click Here" without nearby content that explains their purpose, while others lack accessible names that screen readers can announce. Additionally, multiple links on the same page use identical text but navigate to different destinations, which can confuse users who rely on

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
		assistive technology. Providing descriptive, unique link text helps ensure that all users can navigate your content confidently and efficiently.
2.5.1 Pointer Gestures (Level A 2.1 and 2.2)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
2.5.2 Pointer Cancellation (Level A 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has interactive elements like forms and buttons that require pointer cancellation functionality for accessibility.
2.5.3 Label in Name (Level A 2.1 and 2.2)	Partially Supports	The visible text that users see on buttons and links should match what assistive technologies announce to screen reader users. When the visual label differs from the accessible name, it can create confusion for users who navigate using voice commands or other assistive tools, as they may try to activate controls using the visible text but the system won't recognize their commands.
2.5.4 Motion Actuation (Level A 2.1 and 2.2)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
3.1.1 Language of Page (Level A)	Partially Supports	Pages should include language identification to help screen readers and other assistive technologies pronounce content correctly. When the page language isn't specified, screen readers may use incorrect pronunciation rules, making the content difficult to understand for users who rely on these tools.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
3.2.1 On Focus (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has focusable interactive elements that must not cause unexpected context changes when receiving focus.
3.2.2 On Input (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has forms and input elements that must not cause unexpected context changes when user input values are changed.
3.2.6 Consistent Help (Level A 2.2 only)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
3.3.1 Error Identification (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has complex submission forms and user registration that require error identification when input errors occur.
3.3.2 Labels or Instructions (Level A)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has forms for manuscript submission and user registration that require labels or instructions for user input.
3.3.7 Redundant Entry (Level A 2.2 only)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
4.1.1 Parsing (Level A) WCAG 2.0 and 2.1 – Always answer ‘Supports’ WCAG 2.2 (obsolete and removed) - Does not apply	Supports	For WCAG 2.0 and 2.1, the September 2023 errata update indicates this criterion is always supported. See the WCAG 2.0 Editorial Errata and the WCAG 2.1 Editorial Errata .
4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (Level A)	Partially Supports	Several keyboard navigation and accessibility issues need attention to ensure all users can interact with your content effectively. Elements that are hidden from screen readers shouldn't contain content that users can focus on with their keyboard, as this creates confusion when users can navigate to something they

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
		can't access. All clickable controls should be reachable using only the keyboard, since many users navigate without a mouse. Form controls need clear, accessible names so users understand what information to enter. Additionally, some interactive elements are incorrectly nested within other interactive elements, which can prevent assistive technologies from working properly and may cause navigation problems for users relying on keyboard or screen reader access.

Table 2: Success Criteria, Level AA

Notes:

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.2.4 Captions (Live) (Level AA)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
1.2.5 Audio Description (Prerecorded) (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has prerecorded video content including documentaries and research videos that require audio description for accessibility.
1.3.4 Orientation (Level AA 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Silverchair platform implements responsive design that must not restrict content to specific display orientations.
1.3.5 Identify Input Purpose (Level AA 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has forms collecting user information like names, emails, and

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
		contact details that require input purpose identification.
1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum) (Level AA)	Partially Supports	When customizing colors for text or background elements, please ensure you define both text and background colors together. Setting only one color property (like just the text color or just the background color) can create readability issues, especially for users who have customized their browser settings or use high contrast modes.
1.4.4 Resize text (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site content must support text resizing up to 200% without loss of functionality, confirmed by Silverchair platform WCAG compliance.
1.4.5 Images of Text (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Academic journal site likely contains images of text in graphics, logos, or decorative elements that should be avoided or properly implemented.
1.4.10 Reflow (Level AA 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Silverchair platform implements responsive design requiring content reflow at 320 CSS pixels width without horizontal scrolling.
1.4.11 Non-text Contrast (Level AA 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has user interface components and graphical elements that require sufficient contrast ratios for non-text content.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.4.12 Text Spacing (Level AA 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Academic journal site with extensive text content must support text spacing adjustments without loss of functionality.
1.4.13 Content on Hover or Focus (Level AA 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has interactive elements that may trigger additional content on hover or focus, requiring dismissible and persistent content.
2.4.5 Multiple Ways (Level AA)	Partially supports	Provide two or more ways to reach each page: via links, search, a site map or table of contents.
2.4.6 Headings and Labels (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Academic journal site has complex content structure requiring descriptive headings and labels for navigation and comprehension.
2.4.7 Focus Visible (Level AA)	Partially Supports	The visual styling on certain elements interferes with the focus outline that appears when users navigate using their keyboard. This focus outline is essential for users who rely on keyboard navigation to see which element they're currently on. When custom borders or outline styles hide or obscure this important visual indicator, it becomes difficult or impossible for keyboard users to track their location on the page, making navigation challenging and potentially inaccessible.
2.4.11 Focus Not Obscured (Minimum) (Level AA 2.2 only)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has interactive elements that receive focus and must ensure focus indicators are not obscured by other content.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
2.5.7 Dragging Movements (Level AA 2.2 only)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
2.5.8 Target Size (Minimum) (Level AA 2.2 only)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has interactive elements that must meet minimum target size requirements for touch interaction accessibility.
3.1.2 Language of Parts (Level AA)	Partially Supports	When your content includes words or phrases in languages other than the main page language, these should be properly identified with language markup. This helps screen readers switch to the appropriate pronunciation and accent rules for those specific words or phrases, ensuring they're read correctly for users. Without proper language identification, foreign words may be mispronounced or difficult to understand when announced by assistive technologies.
3.2.3 Consistent Navigation (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has multiple journals with navigation that should be consistent in relative order across related pages.
3.2.4 Consistent Identification (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has repeated functional components across multiple pages that require consistent identification and labeling.
3.3.3 Error Suggestion (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has complex manuscript submission and registration forms that should provide error suggestions when input errors are detected.

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3.3.4 Error Prevention (Legal, Financial, Data) (Level AA)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Academic publishing involves legal commitments, data submission, and potentially financial transactions requiring error prevention mechanisms.
3.3.8 Accessible Authentication (Minimum) (Level AA 2.2 only)	Not Applicable	This criterion is not applicable as the website does not contain the relevant functionality or content type.
4.1.3 Status Messages (Level AA 2.1 and 2.2)	Supports	No accessibility issues detected. Site has forms and interactive processes that generate status messages for user feedback and should be programmatically determinable.

Table 3: Success Criteria, Level AAA

Notes:

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.2.6 Sign Language (Prerecorded) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
1.2.7 Extended Audio Description (Prerecorded) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
1.2.8 Media Alternative (Prerecorded) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
1.2.9 Audio-only (Live) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.3.6 Identify Purpose (Level AAA 2.1 and 2.2)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
1.4.7 Low or No Background Audio (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
1.4.8 Visual Presentation (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
1.4.9 Images of Text (No Exception) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.1.3 Keyboard (No Exception) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.2.3 No Timing (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.2.4 Interruptions (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.2.5 Re-authenticating (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.2.6 Timeouts (Level AAA 2.1 and 2.2)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.3.2 Three Flashes (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
2.3.3 Animation from Interactions (Level AAA 2.1 and 2.2)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.4.8 Location (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.4.9 Link Purpose (Link Only) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.4.10 Section Headings (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.4.12 Focus Not Obscured (Enhanced) (Level AAA 2.2 only)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.4.13 Focus Appearance (Level AAA 2.2 only)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.5.5 Target Size (Level AAA 2.1 and 2.2)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
2.5.6 Concurrent Input Mechanisms (Level AAA 2.1 and 2.2)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
3.1.3 Unusual Words (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
3.1.4 Abbreviations (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
3.1.5 Reading Level (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
3.1.6 Pronunciation (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
3.2.5 Change on Request (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
3.3.5 Help (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
3.3.6 Error Prevention (All) (Level AAA)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.
3.3.9 Accessible Authentication (Enhanced) (Level AAA 2.2 only)		Level AAA criteria are not evaluated for this assessment.