

Designer's Web Accessibility Checklist

Guidelines for designers and cartographers on how to make visual assets accessible across The Nature Conservancy's digital platforms.



Any design asset should meet the following accessibility standards:

ALT TEXT

- The asset includes alternative text. Alt text should describe the asset and everything it includes as if to a person who can't see it. For example, "A flock of sandhill cranes fly across a lake at sunset." Alt text will be required for nature.org publishers uploading assets onto AEM.

COLOR CONTRAST

- There is sufficient color contrast between the foreground and background of elements (minimum passing contrast ratio for non-text elements on a background is 3:1).*
- There is sufficient color contrast between elements that sit next to each other, for example, segments on a pie chart (minimum passing contrast ratio for non-text elements on a background is 3:1).*

NON-COLOR ALTERNATIVES

- Color is not the only variable used to convey information, for example, I don't use colors to convey instructions ('See green area').
- There are non-color visual treatments to distinguish information clearly, such as patterns, symbols, icons or text labels (available on the asset or in a tool tip).



If the asset also contains text:

TEXT COLOR CONTRAST

- There is sufficient color contrast between the text and background (minimum passing contrast ratio for text on background is 4.5:1).*

TEXT FORMATTING

- Paragraph text is formatted using a rich text editor.
- Overall, the design avoids text being formatted into the graphic. However, if text must be formatted into the graphic, such as an illustrated headline, the text should be reiterated in the alt text. ([Source example](#))

FONT LEGIBILITY

- Generally, fonts used are no smaller than 16px (anything smaller is at least bolded, but goes no smaller than 12px). *(Note: If you are uploading a graphic using the image component, make sure you are designing to the specs. For example, 'C38 Image - Large variation' spans 1290px wide. Therefore, your image canvas should be at least 1290px wide, and type should go no smaller than 16px.)*
- There are no 'Light' weight styles used in any of the fonts.
- All fonts used are web-safe versions. *(Note: If you're using condense styled fonts such as Knockout, please keep in mind how counter-space can affect the type's legibility on web. Designers should avoid using any condensed Knockout fonts that go lower than Knockout No. 69 Full Lightweight and should reserve Knockout for only header treatments or logos.)*
- Display text is only used for headers.



If the asset is a map:

MAP LABELS

There is sufficient contrast between the map labels/markers and the map it sits on. To ensure this is achieved, I have either:

- Added a stroke outline to the labels (see Google Maps), or...
- Added a box behind labels, or...
- Bolded all labels and made sure the labels used against the map meet the minimum contrast ratio of 4.5:1.*

MAP REGIONS/TERRITORIES

Regions and territories that are important to call out on the map such as states, countries, cities or counties are visually distinguished. To ensure this is achieved, I have either:

- Added clear border lines around countries or states, or...
- Used sufficient color contrast (minimum contrast ratio of 3:1)* between two bordering territories, or...
- Applied differing patterns or textures to countries or states.

* To check for the color contrast ratio, visit <https://monido.com/tools/contrast-checker>

For more information on web accessibility, visit <https://digital.nature.org/resources/web/web-accessibility-guidance/>