

## BSA Publications' Revenue and APC Analysis – May 2024

The first chart shows some of the Wiley-owned or -partnered journals in the plant sciences. A few observations:

- *New Phytologist*, which in 2021 was priced at \$3,000, has almost doubled its Article Publication Charges (APC). They kept their APC artificially low for years but in 2022 agreed to align it with other top-tier titles.
- There's a clear relationship between Impact Factor and APC—the *Journal of Ecology* has a significantly lower IF, but their APC is lower as well.
- *AJB* has made good strides in increasing its APC—a 34% increase over 3 years is the most robust APC increase of the group after *New Phytologist*, but still almost 40% lower than the *Journal of Ecology*.

American Journal of Botany Competitors (Wiley-published)	2021	2024	APC % increase	Impact Factor
The Plant Journal	\$4,400	\$5,190	18%	7.2
Plant, Cell, and Environment	\$4,300	\$5,300	23%	7.3
New Phytologist	\$3,000	\$5,790	93%	9.4
Journal of Ecology	\$3,000	\$3,500	17%	5.5
American Journal of Botany	\$1,650	\$2,215	34%	3

The next chart shows some related titles published by other publishers. 2021 information is not included here, just 2024 APCs and Impact Factors. Here again you can see a relationship between Impact Factor and APC.

Competitor titles (non-Wiley published)	2024	Impact Factor
Journal of Experimental Biology	\$3,776	6
Annals of Botany	\$3,298	4.2
Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society	\$3,227	2.4
AOB Plants	\$1,160	2.9
International Journal of Plant Sciences	\$1,300	2.3

For APPS, the main competitor is *Plant Methods*:

Applications in Plant Sciences Competitor	2024	Impact Factor
Plant Methods	\$2,990	5.1
APPS	\$1,970	3.6

Finally, here is the APC increase schedule that we agreed upon during the renewal process:

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
AJB APC	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,213	\$2,449	\$2,710	\$3,000

Percentage increase	21%	0%	10%	10%	10%	10%
<b>APPS APC</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>	<b>\$1,882</b>	<b>\$1,968</b>	<b>\$2,058</b>	<b>\$2,152</b>	<b>\$2,250</b>
Percentage increase	20%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%

The Wiley Pricing team thinks (and we concur) that the BSA journals are a bit underpriced. For 2025, they recommend an APC of \$3,000 for AJB. This would not look out of place—the *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* has a lower IF and higher APC. It is a 35% increase over 2024 pricing, but we should remember that **83% of AJB’s OA income came from Transformational Agreements in 2023**, meaning that only **17% were paying full price out of pocket**. BSA members also receive a 25% discount on these APCs currently, and a 20% discount in the remaining three years of our agreement with Wiley.

For APPS the Pricing team recommends an APC of \$2,350, a 19% increase. Again, this is more aggressive than our initial schedule, but it does not seem out of place given competitor APCs.

### **Revenue Projections for Raising APCs Under two Scenarios**

We asked Wiley to run to scenarios for APC rate increases to compare revenue projections with the current status quo under our publications agreement. The scenarios are:

1. AJB at \$2650 for 2025; \$3000 for 2026; \$3300 for 2027;  
APPS at \$2350 for 2025 with 5% increases thereafter
2. AJB at \$3000 for 2025, \$3150 for 2026 and \$3350 for 2027  
APPS at \$2350 for 2025; \$2475 for 2026; \$2650 for 2027

Below are the predicted results.

<b>Status Quo</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
Online Only	51,459	45,828	40,805
Other licenses	253,824	228,442	205,597
All journal license	188,459	169,613	152,652
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>493,751</b>	<b>443,882</b>	<b>399,054</b>
<b>Subscription</b>			
Online Open	142,106	169,188	200,439
Direct Submission	68,037	76,138	84,825
Publication Fees			
<b>Subtotal: Open</b>	<b>210,144</b>	<b>245,325</b>	<b>285,264</b>
<b>Access</b>			
Rights	20,201	19,191	18,231
Backfiles	5,990	5,391	4,852
Article sales/Pay per View	1,791	1,701	1,616
<b>Subtotal: Other</b>	<b>27,981</b>	<b>26,283</b>	<b>24,699</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>731,876</b>	<b>715,490</b>	<b>709,017</b>

<b>Scenario 1</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
Online Only	51,459	45,828	40,805
Other licenses	253,824	228,442	205,597
All journal license	188,459	169,613	152,652
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>493,751</b>	<b>443,882</b>	<b>399,954</b>
<b>Subscription</b>			
Online Open	153,707	187,224	220,483
Direct Submission	77,691	87,318	97,681
Publication Fees			
<b>Subtotal: Open</b>	<b>231,398</b>	<b>274,541</b>	<b>318,164</b>
<b>Access</b>			
Rights	20,201	19,191	18,231
Backfiles	5,990	5,391	4,852
Article sales/Pay per View	1,791	1,701	1,616
<b>Subtotal: Other</b>	<b>27,981</b>	<b>26,283</b>	<b>24,699</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>753,130</b>	<b>744,706</b>	<b>741,917</b>

<b>Scenario 2</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
Online Only	51,459	45,828	40,805
Other licenses	253,824	228,442	205,597
All journal license	188,459	169,613	152,652
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>493,751</b>	<b>443,882</b>	<b>399,954</b>
<b>Subscription</b>			
Online Open	174,008	196,585	223,824
Direct Submission	77,691	87,566	99,905
Publication Fees			
<b>Subtotal: Open</b>	<b>251,699</b>	<b>284,150</b>	<b>323,729</b>
<b>Access</b>			
Rights	20,201	19,191	18,231
Backfiles	5,990	5,391	4,852
Article sales/Pay per View	1,791	1,701	1,616
<b>Subtotal: Other</b>	<b>27,981</b>	<b>26,283</b>	<b>24,699</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>773,431</b>	<b>754,315</b>	<b>747,482</b>

### **Recommendation:**

Scenario 2 projects to bring in an approximate \$35K more in open access revenue over three years than Scenario 1. Nearly all of this is due to *AJB*, as the proposed changes for *APPS* between Scenarios 1 and 2 are nearly identical and only appear to be a difference of \$2,472 over the full three years.

The difference between the status quo and Scenario 2 is approximately \$119K in open access revenue over the course of the three years, and the difference between status quo and Scenario 1 is approximately \$83K in OA revenue over those three years.

Your BSA staff has been thinking about this and trying to balance considerations of inclusion and equity for our member community with financial ramifications for the Society. We understand that 83% of APCs

for *AJB* are being paid not by individuals but through transformational deals and agreements. While continually increasing APCs is not sustainable, we do realize that *APPS* and particularly *AJB* are a bit underpriced in comparison with our competitor journals. **We would recommend moving forward with APC increases for 2025, 2026 and 2027 aligned with Scenario 1**, but not the more drastic increases of Scenario 2.

We do note, however, that no matter what steps we take with APCs, the current projections are still showing year-over-year decreases in publications revenue. We have addressed the issue of decreasing publications revenue so far with expense-cutting measures in the BSA budget, but we are also in discussions with the Development Committee and Financial Advisory Committee regarding fundraising campaigns to boost our endowment and reserves from which we would continue our draw from investment earnings to support and sustain BSA operations/programs.

**Note:** *AJB* is a hybrid journal, meaning it receives income from Open Access APCs as well as subscriptions and licensing agreements (though the income from these have decreased steadily over the past several years); no one is prohibited from publishing in *AJB* due to inability to pay, and authors may apply for waivers of the APCs in *APPS* (see [https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/21680450/homepage/article\\_publication\\_charges](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/21680450/homepage/article_publication_charges)). In 2023, 69 out of 151 articles (46%) were published OA and *AJB*; as of the end of April 2024, 32 out of 55 articles (58%) have been OA.