

2021 Tansy beetle boom in York – Eva Freegard

Survey results for the rare Tansy beetles from the river Ouse in York, saw a big success for 2021. Revealing that the beetle had a great year with a 234% increase in beetle numbers counted, this is from a count of 5,941 in 2020 to 13,892 in 2021. After the doubling rule is applied, which allows for beetles missed during the count, this makes the total late summer population estimate of an impressive 27,700 beetles for 2021. This very is good news for this spectacular rare beetle, which significantly dropped in numbers in 2020 to its lowest level in the last 7 years, due mainly to summer flooding. However, 2021 saw the species to bounce back to a 3-year high.

Factors believed to have contributed to this increase in the population in 2021 are the absence of summer flooding, as well as improved management. Efforts of the Species Recovery Trust working in conjunction with the Tansy Beetle Action Group (TBAG) and other local partners, has improved awareness and management along the Ouse. Work has involved advising and supporting important landowners and managers, including the Environment Agency, National Trust and private landowners; to increase and connect habitat. The impacts of this are starting to be seen, with strong core areas which make it easier for the beetle's population to recover after summer floods. There are sites where beetles are doing less well, these are areas where is difficult for the beetle to colonise and recover, this can be due to intense grazing levels and/or other issues.

