



2024 Tansy Beetle Conservation Summary

The latest survey along the River Ouse recorded a dramatic 72% decline in Tansy beetle numbers, dropping from 44,645 in 2023 to 12,363 in 2024. Applying the doubling rule, the estimated late summer population on Tansy plants stood at 24,726—significantly down from the record-breaking 89,290 beetles in 2023. While most areas saw a reduction, seven transects reported small increases, with the most notable being a 62% rise on the east bank from Stillingfleet to Cawood, this is due to management efforts by the Environment Agency. Encouragingly, two beetles were sighted on a Tansy clump between Great Clough and Selby, a rare occurrence previously noted only in 2011 and 2016.

Ark populations also faced challenges, with a 38% decline along the Selby Canal, reducing numbers to 320 beetles. However, efforts to establish a new ark population along the River Foss yielded three beetles. Beyond Tansy plants, beetles were observed feeding on Marsh Woundwort, Water Mint, and mixed plant stands, but none were seen on Gipsywort despite its presence.

Several conservation initiatives continued in 2024. York Museum Gardens progressed with their ark/educational site following flood defence work. Askham Bryan College recorded higher beetle numbers in spring compared to summer at their two ark sites, with more beetles found at the Farm Site than the Wildlife Park Site in both 2023 and 2024. Meanwhile, only three beetles were recorded at University of York St. John Sports Fields following introductions in 2022 and 2023. Plans are underway for educational facilities at Bugtopia, Hornsea, and Banham Zoological Gardens to promote Tansy beetle conservation.

This year's findings highlight significant population declines but also reveal promising conservation efforts and sightings that could aid future strategies.



Credit Jess Chappell