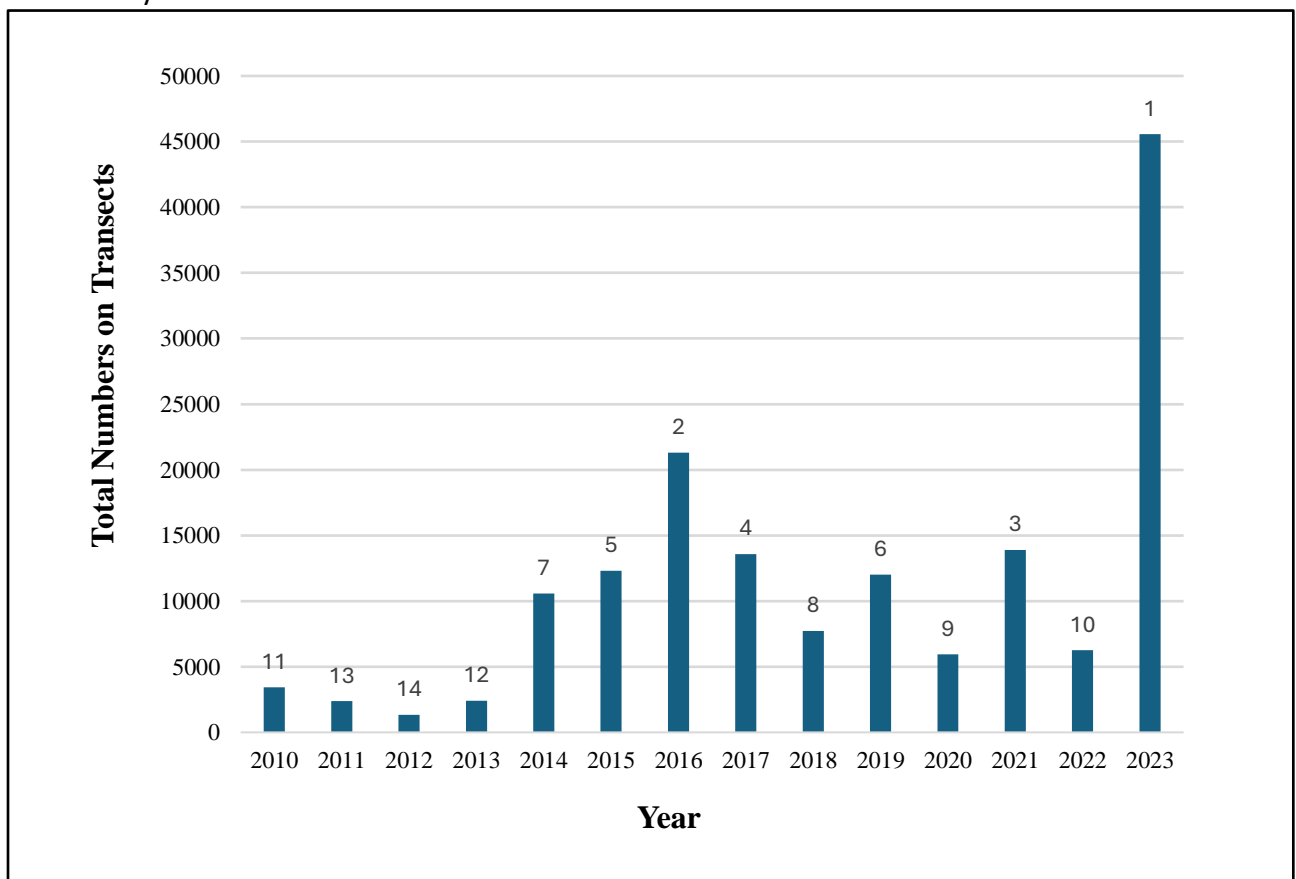


Species Recovery Report - Tansy beetle report 2022/23

There was a dip in Tansy beetle numbers in 2022 but 2023 saw the highest ever record for Tansy beetle numbers since monitoring began 15 years ago. The annual volunteer survey in 2023 along the river Ouse in York revealed a 622% increase in beetle numbers counted on Tansy plants from 6187 in 2022 to 44,645 in 2023. After doubling numbers, the total late summer population on Tansy plants was estimated to be a massive 89,290 beetles, which is the highest number ever recorded during the 15 years of surveying. Double the previous highest population estimate of 46,000 back in 2016; and more than 7 times the 2022 population estimate of 12,000 beetles. One key stretch south of the city saw 20,000 beetles counted by one surveyor!

The graph below shows that the York population numbers are fluctuating, as population numbers do naturally for any insect species, but they are at a higher-level. Particularly from 2014 onwards that although the species is affected by the extreme weather conditions, giving high fluctuation in numbers but the larger population more robust in better habitat conditions and so maintaining annual numbers above 5000.

Graph. Plot of total beetle counts along stretches of bank over time taken from 2023 Tansy beetle Annual Report, numbers over the bars indicate rank order of abundance 1-14 over the last 14 years.



Each year SRT provides a management report to landowners on the Ouse to support and enable them to focus and tailor land management activities to benefit the beetle's conservation. Most survey stretches saw an increase in beetle numbers, some results are likely supported by management activities by landowners who have been planting and protecting Tansy. For example, areas in Fulford managed by a private landowner and the Carstairs Trust, as well as Kelfield Ings and Riccall managed by the EA and the National Trust. Hopefully future surveys will continue to demonstrate such clear successes for the recovery of the amazing Tansy beetle.

Another interesting development in 2023 was that an additional 889 beetles were found feeding on 31 stands of Marsh Woundwort *Stachys palustris*. Twelve Tansy beetles were also seen for the first time feeding on Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica* and likewise 9 on Soapwort *Saponaria officinalis*. Which shows that Tansy beetles are diversifying their foodplants in York, whereas they were previously believed to only be eating Tansy. Increased foodplant species in conservation work, will also have wider benefits to other wildlife.

This year also saw the new Conservation Action Plan 2023-2027 for the beetle published, see [link](#), which sees 19 organisations collaborating on the beetle's conservation.



Mating Tansy beetles,
photo credited Geoff
Oxford