



Dr Tanya Wyatt.

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A Northumbria University academic has been made a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences

A researcher at Northumbria University has been made one of only 40 new fellows of the national Academy of Social Sciences.

The accolade is conferred upon the most outstanding social scientists from around the UK each year, and Professor of Criminology, [Dr Tanya Wyatt](#) will this autumn join an elite group of distinguished individuals representing the full spectrum of the social sciences across academia, the public sector,

business, and the area of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE).

Will Hutton FAcSS, President of the Academy of Social Sciences, which exists to promote understanding of our contemporary human world, said: “Our newly-elected fellows are highly accomplished individuals recognised for excellence in their fields and their wider contributions to the social sciences for public benefit.

“This autumn’s cohort represents a great balance of practitioners and academics. Many are making exceptional efforts to tackle the urgent issues currently facing the UK in areas such as the economy, communities, the environment, places, and beyond.”

Dr Wyatt, who specialises in green criminology with a particular expertise in wildlife crime and trafficking, non-human animal abuse and welfare, said: “This emerging sub-discipline of criminology is a specialism that really advocates for environment and species justice, which was historically an overlooked area, so to have its value recognised on the international stage in this way is very meaningful to me.”

Nominated by Northumbria’s Professor of Public Policy [Irene Hardill](#), who is herself an academy fellow, Dr Wyatt grew up in Oregon, USA, where she developed an initial environmental sensibility before studying biology at Mills College, an historic women’s college, now part of Northeastern University in California.

She continued: “This foundation in natural science gave me a great understanding of our eco-systems, but my academic journey has been somewhat untraditional.”

Dr Wyatt became a US police officer upon graduating and following that served in Ukraine as a US Peace Corps volunteer, where when working on a project for women’s advocacy and the prevention of human trafficking, it occurred to her that non-human species are also commodified, but the crime has a much lower profile.

This realisation led Dr Wyatt to the completion of her PhD in Kent before returning to the USA, where in 2010 she came across an advertised position to join the faculty at Northumbria.

She said: “Northumbria University is a world-leader in helping green criminology towards becoming established on most criminology degree curriculums and I’m very happy to have been able to be part of that.”

Academy Fellows are selected, following independent and robust peer review by an official nominations committee, on the basis of their substantial contributions to policy and practice, and for going above and beyond the normal requirements of their roles. Dr Wyatt’s nomination was seconded by renowned sociologist Professor Nigel South, who before his recent retirement was based at the University of Essex and was one of the fathers of green criminology.

Dr Wyatt added: “It’s an honour to be not only recognised by my close colleagues but also to gain recognition for my field on a national stage. It isn’t often you see a North East based fellowship awarded, so it is my privilege to give green criminology, and Northumbria, a larger international footprint. I look forward to working with my academy colleagues to support more people to become fellows going forward.”

At the end of October, Dr Wyatt will take up a role at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, leading the first ever global report on crimes affecting the environment.

The Department of Social Sciences at Northumbria University offers courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level in our subject fields of Criminology, International Relations and Politics, Sociology and Professional Policing. Find out more at [northumbria.ac.uk](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk).

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