



UNITED STATES  
**COAST GUARD**  
ACADEMY

Science Lecture Series

# Totally Tubular Taxonomy: The Functional Biology and Taxonomic Identity of *Crush*

**Dr. Donna Selch**

*Department of Marine Science, US Coast Guard Academy*

This presentation explores the functional biology and taxonomic identity of *Crush*, the charismatic sea turtle from *Finding Nemo*. The talk will examine the anatomical and physiological adaptations that enable this species to thrive in pelagic and coastal marine environments including trophic ecology, lifespan dietary shifts, and the ecological role of sea turtles in ecosystem health. Using principles of marine biology, comparative anatomy, and systematics, characters in the infamous animation will be dissected and examined into parts to understand the whole organism. By integrating taxonomy with functional traits, this presentation will demonstrate how an environment shapes biological design, using a familiar pop culture organism to illuminate broader concepts in vertebrate biology, marine ecology, and ecological physiology.

***Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026***

***2000 - 2100***

***Dimick Auditorium***

***U.S. Coast Guard Academy***

Dr. Donna Selch is an Associate Professor in Marine Science at USCGA with specialties in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing, whose academic career bridges spatial science and environmental research. She holds advanced degrees in GIS and Remote Sensing, with expertise in spatial modeling, satellite image analysis, and environmental data visualization. Her teaching and research focus on applying geospatial technologies to understand complex ecological systems and support science-based conservation. While her professional foundation is rooted in geospatial science, Dr. Selch also harbors a deep passion for the study and conservation of sea turtles. Her work integrates satellite imagery, spatial tracking, and habitat modeling to better understand sea turtle migration, nesting behavior, and coastal habitat use. She is especially dedicated to educating students about sea turtle biology, conservation challenges, and the critical role individuals can play in protecting these remarkable marine species. Through this blend of technology and biology she brings a powerful interdisciplinary perspective to marine conservation, inspiring others to use spatial tools in service of protecting vulnerable ocean wildlife.

**If you have any questions regarding the event, please contact Dr. Kanani K. M. Lee  
([kanani.km.lee@uscga.edu](mailto:kanani.km.lee@uscga.edu)) for more information.**