

Conservation groups sue over sea turtle rules

November 9, 2012

HONOLULU (AP) — A lawsuit has been filed challenging new rules allowing for more endangered sea turtles to be incidentally caught by Hawaii's longline swordfish fishery.

The complaint was filed Friday in Honolulu's federal district court by environmental law firm Earthjustice on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity and Turtle Restoration Network.

Sea turtles and migratory seabirds can drown when they become caught on baited hooks or entangled in gear used in the longline fishery.

The groups accuse the National Marine Fisheries Service of rolling back protections gained through a 2011 settlement that capped the number of sea turtles that could be caught by the fishery at 17 endangered loggerheads and 16 endangered leatherbacks.

The groups say the new federal rule doubles the number of endangered turtles than can be killed.