



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

09/21/16

Contact:

Shelley Paik

808.246.4378

spaik@kiuc.coop

KIUC Continues Testing Lasers as Part of Seabird Protection Efforts

Līhu'e, HI – 09/21/16 – The Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) has begun the third year of testing an experimental laser system to prevent endangered seabirds from colliding with power lines.

The testing, which will continue until the end of 2016, involves installing laser arrays on transmission poles near Kaumuali'i Highway in the vicinity of Kilohana Crater and Halfway Bridge and also along spans of transmission lines on the Power Line Trail. The laser tests will be conducted at night. When the equipment is in use, members of the public may see a green glow near the power lines. The lasers do not interfere with aircraft operations or public safety.

The Newell's shearwater and Hawaiian petrel are threatened native species vulnerable to death or injury from collisions with unseen objects because they fly out to sea and back at night and in the early morning. They are at greatest risk during a new moon phase, when the skies are the darkest.

The premise of the testing is that if birds see what they may perceive as a green "fence" near the power lines, they will take evasive action and fly over or around the obstacles without actually striking wires. The testing will affirm or disprove that premise. The first two years of the program were devoted to testing equipment for effectiveness and reliability.

The research is a collaboration between KIUC and Kaua'i Endangered Seabird Recovery Project (KESRP), a Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources/Division of Forestry and Wildlife project, administered by the Pacific Studies Co-operative Unit of the University of Hawai'i.

KIUC provides more than \$2 million per year in support for research into wildlife habitat protection. KIUC is evaluating power line and lighting reconfiguration, habitat restoration and predator control and injured bird rehabilitation. These experimental techniques, if effective, could drastically reduce the cost to KIUC and its members for protecting endangered seabirds.

###