

A Wonderful World of Knowledge...Know More About It

Episode #14: Birds on a Wire

Tonight we'll answer the question, "Why aren't birds sitting on power lines electrocuted?"

Your first thought might be that plastic insulation protects the birds. You'd be mistaken.

The amount of electricity in high voltage lines is so great that insulation offers little protection, so it's only used where it reduces the chance that electricity might jump from the wire to a tree limb or some other object.

This means that birds on power lines are often clutching bare wire.

So, why aren't they electrocuted?

Electricity flowing in a wire is like a car speeding down a highway. There is little reason for the car to make a detour, only to get back on the highway.

That's why electricity stays in the wire and out of the bird.

But if the bird touches both the wire and something else, the consequences are deadly.

