

# Think before you lift...



would you like it  
if your home was disturbed?



# Think before you lift..

## Bushrock and fragile habitats

Bushrock is loose fragile rock found on rock or soil surfaces that takes many years to develop. Many animals use these rock environments for shelter or to hide from predators, find food, avoid extreme weather and escape bushfires. Bushrock can also provide egg-laying sites for reptiles and habitat for many different plants, mosses, liverworts and lichens. It is also an important component of the surrounding environment as it reduces soil erosion and retains stability and soil moisture.

If bushrock is moved or removed it can change the ability of the bushrock to provide habitat. For example, the broad-headed snake requires very specific crevice requirements and this can easily change with even a slight movement or crack in the rock. In addition, lifting, moving, replacing or dropping bushrock can also harm animals living underneath as they can be inadvertently squashed or injured by unexpected movements.



Would you like it if someone pulled the roof off your house or pulled back your bedcovers while you were sleeping?



C.E.van Pickett



Bushrock provides the home or habitat for many different species such as spiders, beetles, skinks, geckos, frogs and snakes. It provides them with shelter from the wind, rain and sun and it is somewhere safe from predators.

# Think before you lift...



## whose home are you disturbing?



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D.Pike

## Health risks

Disturbance of bushrock can also be dangerous to humans. Some of Australia's venomous and poisonous animals live under or near bushrock such as scorpions, funnel web spiders, centipedes, bull ants, jumping jack ants, paper wasps, tiger snakes, brown snakes and the broad-headed snake. Bites or stings from these can be fatal if not treated in time. Stay safe and avoid disturbing animals and their habitats.

## It's illegal

Disturbance or removal of bushrock could result in a fine or prosecution. For instance, lifting or moving bushrock in a national park or other conservation reserves can incur fines of \$300. Furthermore, the damage or removal of bushrock carries greater penalties of up to \$11,000, six months imprisonment or both. Similarly the collection or removal of bushrock from state forests and Crown land reserves is prohibited. Some local councils regulate bushrock removal. Blue Mountains City Council and Hawkesbury City Council have prohibited the collection or removal of bushrock from bushland areas.

N.Williams



## How you can help

The Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) is coordinating various programs for the protection of biodiversity and species habitat. State and local government agencies and research institutions are undertaking various actions to contribute to these programs. More information on the recovery of threatened species and threat abatement actions is available at [www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au).

The success of these programs depends on community support and you can help by following any or all of the suggestions below.

- **Think before you lift:** By not lifting or removing bushrock you will avoid disturbing the fragile habitat that bushrock provides. Remember insects, frogs, snakes, lizards and geckos might reside under bushrock. The best way to observe them is to sit, watch and listen. This will allow them to move about freely. Visit zoos and wildlife parks near you – they have a variety of interesting exhibitions of many varied and wonderful animals. In addition, interest groups such as the Frog and Tadpole Study Group and herpetological societies can broaden your interest in frogs and reptiles.
- **Tread gently:** Whether you are bushwalking, mountain biking, rock climbing or off-road driving, be mindful of where you tread or drive. Sandstone environments are fragile and bushrock can easily break if disturbed, contributing to habitat disturbance and loss. Keep to existing tracks and trails and obey signs for road closures or prohibited activities such as 'No motorbikes' or 'No dogs'. Don't move rocks around for use as cairns, seats, jumps or any other purpose.
- **Report sightings:** Inform DECC if you see an interesting species or come across any suspicious activities, like bushrock collection or someone turning over rocks and/or collecting animals. New sightings of individual species will broaden our