

Rocky Outcrop Shrubland - Herbland

VULNERABLE in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

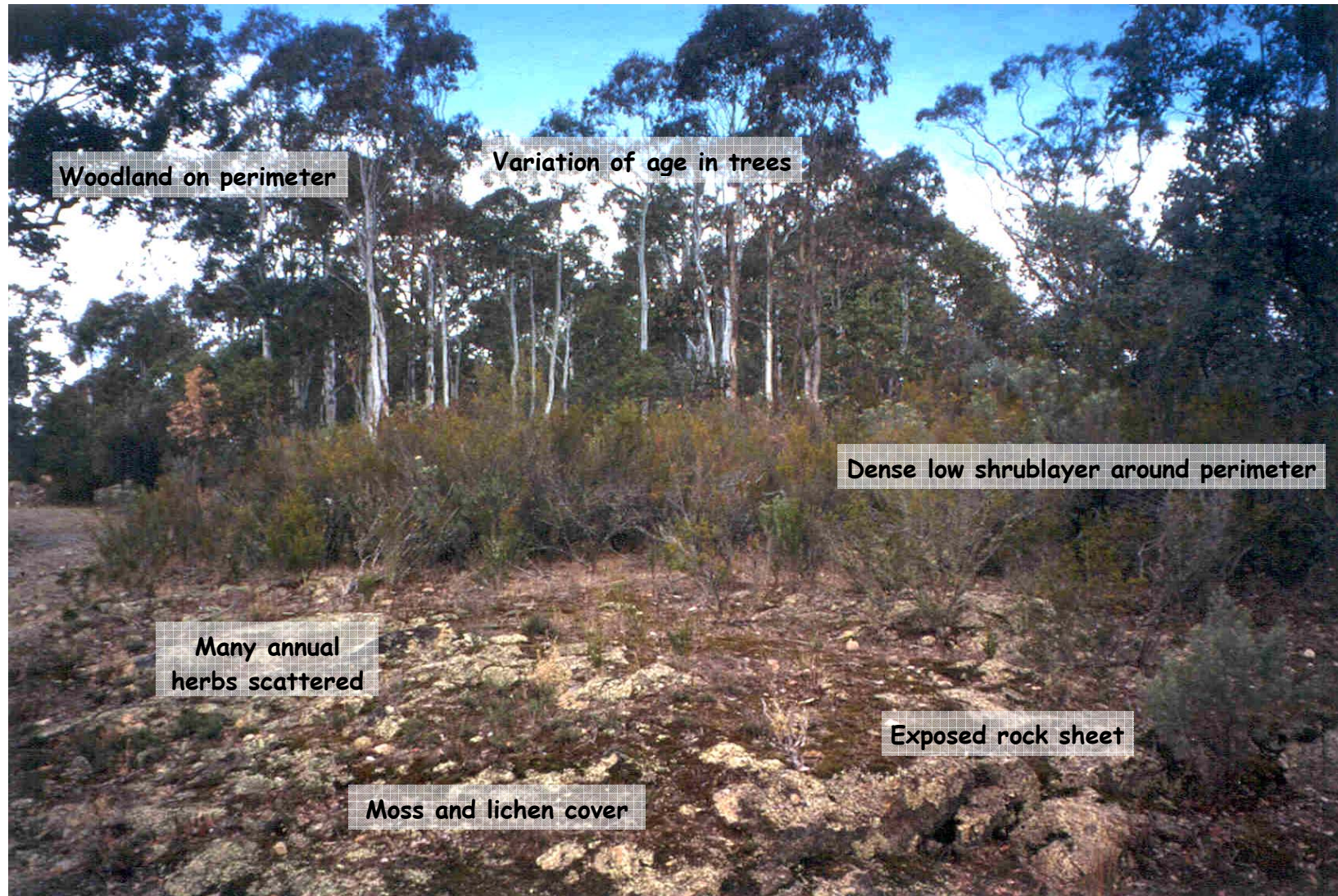


Photo: Sue Berwick

Figure 1 An example of Rocky Outcrop Shrubland / Herbland mosaic in good condition, with important diagnostic and habitat features noted.

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60% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 28% (138ha) of which is on private land

Description

Rocky Outcrop Shrubland / Herbland mosaic occurs at elevations of 150-450m and an annual rainfall of 400-900mm, on sites of exposed sheets of rock with no soil and low moisture availability (except in the cracks between rock surfaces). Around the perimeter there is a **dense low shrub layer** (particularly in sites with minimal exposed rock) comprising of Common Fringe-myrtle, Daphne Heath, Nodding Blue-lily and Varnish Wattle and occasional eucalypts (usually Hill Red Gum). There is also a **sparse cover** of Green Rock Fern, Rock Isotome (a key feature), Common Centaury, Creeping Cudweed, Austral Cranesbill, Common Raspwort, Small St. John's Wort and Spoon Cudweed. There is usually a high **moss** and **lichen** (briophyte) cover on the rock.

Current Threats

- Loss of tree and ground **habitat** (through **timber harvesting**, **firewood collection**, and "tidying-up" of fallen sticks), threatens associated native fauna.
- Inappropriate **grazing regimes** compact and disturb the soil, increase nutrients (favouring weed species), hinder native plant regeneration and cause loss of native species.
- Too frequent/infrequent **burning** which can mean the loss of some species.
- **Weeds**, particularly St. Johns Wort, compete with native species.
- **Pest animals** defoliate native vegetation, disturb the soil and threaten native fauna as predators and by competing for food.
- **Isolation** of remnants makes it difficult to maintain a healthy gene pool and to recolonise with native species following disturbance, and restricts the movement of native fauna.
- Lack of native **understorey** and **groundlayer** plants, which: attract insect eating birds, helping keep the overstorey healthy; and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen.
- Lack of **natural regeneration** of plants threatens the viability of the remnant.



Figure 2 Distribution of Rocky Outcrop Shrubland - Herbland in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Significant Species

Flora: Dookie Daisy, Hairy Hop-bush, Spur-wing Wattle (in east of catchment), Crimson Spider-orchid, Yellow Hyacinth-orchid and Grey Rice-flower.

Fauna: Powerful Owl, Bandy Bandy, Carpet Python (Warby Ranges area), Turquoise Parrot (Warby Ranges area) and Tuan.

Management Tips

Management which **maintains** and **enhances** the remnant vegetation / habitat, including:

- **Fence** sites to **exclude grazing**. **Minimise traffic** and access to retain sensitive bryophyte cover and shrub layer.
- **Control** weeds and pest animals, particularly rabbits and foxes.
- Encourage **natural regeneration** by **controlling rabbits**, **reducing competition** with grasses prior to seed fall and **removing stock**.
- **Revegetate** around remnants to buffer from pasture and link with other remnants.
- **Plant understorey** for remnants with no native shrubs or ground layer.
- **Retain** dead & hollow-bearing trees (where absent, erect nest boxes) and **leave** fallen timber and branches.
- **Monitor** your site and **adapt management** practices as required (help is available to assist and set up monitoring).