

# MARINE CREATURES – CONE SHELLS

*Conus sp.*

## WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

The shells of the cone shell are shaped like an ice-cream cone, brightly coloured and intricately patterned. Inside the shell, is a snail. Parts of the snail that appear outside the shell are its foot used for movement, a siphon which draws in water for them to breathe and a tooth or snout used for hunting and defence.

## WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

In shallow water, sand flats and reefs all around Australia.

## WHY ARE THEY DANGEROUS?

Cone shells have harpoon-like darts which can deliver paralysing venom via their tooth. This venom can cause nausea, weakness, numbness, tingling and affect your movement, vision, hearing and speech. It also stops your lungs working, which can lead to death.

## HOW TO AVOID THEM?

Do not pick up any cone-shaped shells, even if they are washed up on shore. There is no safe way to pick up a cone shell as their tooth can reach all parts of the shell.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET HURT

Call 000 to get urgent medical assistance. Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage to the bite site, if you're not sure how to do this ask your patient to remain as still as possible. If your patient stops breathing provide CPR.

