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**Alagoas Antwren  
*Myrmotherula snowi*: a new  
locality and remarks on its  
conservation**

The Pernambuco Centre<sup>10</sup> comprises the Atlantic Forest north of the rio São Francisco in the states of Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte. This is the most deforested part of the Atlantic Forest biome, with mostly small (<500 ha) forest fragments within an urban and

agriculture matrix<sup>5,11</sup>. Submontane forests above >500 m harbour many endemic taxa, especially of birds<sup>7</sup>. Avian studies in these forests are rather recent, and only commenced in earnest when four taxa were described from Murici, Alagoas, c.30 years ago: Alagoas Foliage-gleaner *Philydor novaesi*, Orange-bellied Antwren *Terenura sicki*, Alagoas Antwren *Myrmotherula snowi* and Alagoas Tyrannulet *Phylloscartes ceciliae*. More recently, all these birds were found in Pernambuco, at Mata do Estado, São Vicente Ferrer<sup>6,8</sup> and Frei Caneca private reserve at Jaqueira<sup>4</sup>. Alagoas Antwren is considered Critically Endangered at global and national levels<sup>1,3</sup>.

We conducted ornithological research at Engenho Jussará (08°17'S 35°35'W), Gravatá municipality, Pernambuco, which harbours several forest fragments at different stages of succession, totalling 400 ha. Most of the area is second growth, with occasional trees reaching 35 m in more mature patches. This forest is classified as 'semi-deciduous seasonal forest'<sup>2</sup>. A three-day survey (22–24 April 2005) recorded 104 bird species<sup>9</sup>. On 22 April, an Alagoas Antwren was heard in a forest fragment known as Mata do Benedito, within a steep narrow valley that has a small creek in its bottom and a dense understorey of lianas. An adult male was attracted by playback, but no further records were made during the survey despite use of playback. All available data show Alagoas Antwren inhabits wet forests commonly clouded in mist, usually near small creeks where the undergrowth is rich in lianas (SAR pers. obs.). At Murici it associates with mixed-species flocks (W. Girão pers. obs.) and at Mata do Estado usually with White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris*, where they were mist-netted together by SAR in October 1999. At Frei Caneca and Murici *M. snowi* has been recorded several times in family groups<sup>5</sup>, and sometimes away from creeks (SAR pers. obs.).

Even now, the known range of Alagoas Antwren is very small

(1,316 km<sup>2</sup>) and the four known localities are all widely spread. Alagoas Antwren may occur elsewhere in similar forest above 500 m, e.g. Serra dos Mascarenhas, Lagoa dos Gatos, Amaraji, Bonito, Brejo dos Cavalos, Maraial and Usina Serra Grande. Like Alagoas Antwren, *Terenura sicki* and *Phylloscartes ceciliae* are only found at higher elevations. Both occur at Serra Grande and Serra dos Mascarenhas (Engenho Água Azul) but despite intensive effort Alagoas Antwren has not been found at these localities.

Independent of forest type (open ombrophylous forest at Murici and semi-deciduous seasonal forest in Engenho Jussará, Frei Caneca and Mata do Estado<sup>2</sup>) Alagoas Antwren appears to be exclusively found in higher altitude forests.

Only two of the four sites where Alagoas Antwren is known are nominally protected: Murici and Frei Caneca. To guarantee the species' conservation, the other areas should be made conservation units. Engenho Jussará also harbours *Phylloscartes ceciliae*, White-backed Fire-eye *Pyriglena leuconota pernambucensis*, Pinto's Spinetail *Synallaxis infuscata* and Buff-breasted Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus mirandae*.

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**Sônia Aline Roda**

*Centro de Pesquisas Ambientais do  
Nordeste, Rua Nogueira de Souza  
190/102, Pina, CEP 51110-110,  
Recife, PE, Brazil. E-mail:  
sonia@cepan.org.br.*

**Glauco Alves Pereira and  
Sidnei de Melo Dantas**

*Observadores de Aves de  
Pernambuco, Av. Agamenon  
Magalhães 28, QC-13, Engenho  
Maranguape, CEP 53423-440,  
Paulista, PE, Brazil. E-mails:  
glaucoapereira@yahoo.com.br and  
smdantas@yahoo.com.*

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