

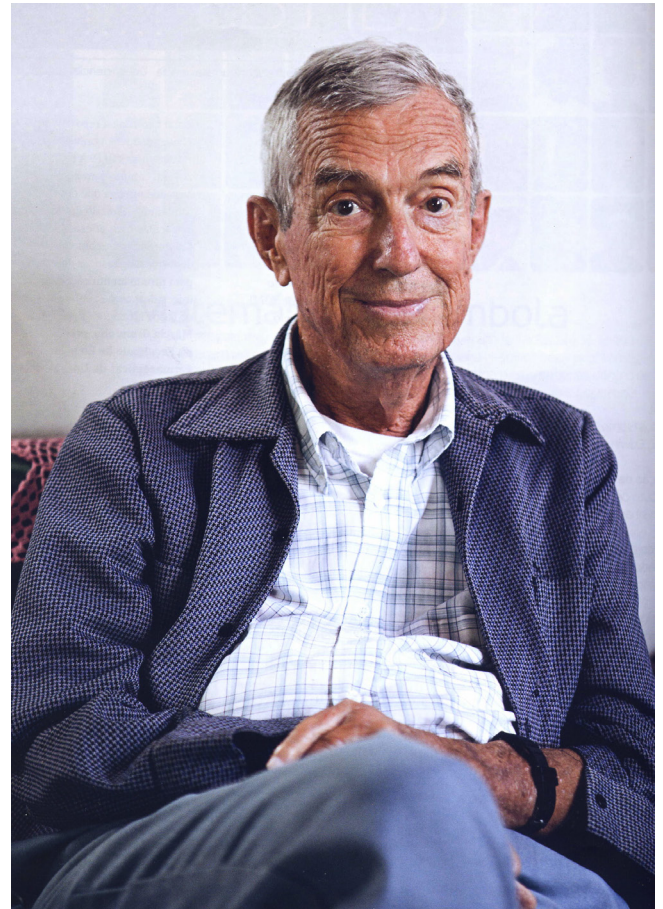
Obituary: Dr. Edwin O'Neill Willis (1935-2015)

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A citizen and a professional without peer. In 1982, while still an undergraduate, I had the privilege of meeting and becoming a student of Professor Willis. From that point on I have had the good fortune to follow and admire his dedication and enthusiasm that he applied to his ornithological studies. For Professor Willis, even taking a moment to observe the day-to-day lives of the commonest birds was cause for great personal satisfaction, that is, he was always interested and always felt that he had something to learn about these fascinating animals. This obsession started very early in his backyard in and around his home in Russellville, Alabama in the United States. As a boy he did not stop at simply watching birds, but always took care to write about his observations. Such precocity and seriousness with which he executed these first studies resulted, at the tender age of just 14, in his first publication on the group (Fall field trip to St. Francis Sanctuary. *Maryland Birdlife* 5: 66, 1949), clear evidence of his vocation for these studies which would continue throughout his life. On this journey his training began with a degree in Biology from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute (1956); then an MSc in Zoology from the University of Louisiana (1958); a doctorate in zoology from the University of California - Berkeley (1964) and postdoctoral position at the American Museum of Natural History (1966). The period he spent collecting data for his MSc thesis "*The foraging behavior of ant-tanagers in British Honduras*" in 1957 in Belize was likely sacramental for his later dedication to Neotropical birds in general, and his studies of ant-following birds in particular. Later, his research would take him to countries such as Panama, Trinidad, Guyana, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, in addition to many studies in Brazil, particularly in the Atlantic Forest and Amazon. Later on he expanded the geographical scope of his studies to broaden the synthesis on the behavior of army ant followers by carrying out research from east to west in the Afrotropics. Basically, if there existed places where birds follow army ants, Professor Willis was there to investigate and clarify the nature of these interesting relationships and he became a global authority on the subject. His name is honored in the English common name of *Cercomacra laeta* – Willis's Antbird and in the generic name *Willisornis*, which is applied to two species – Common Scale-backed Antbird



Edwin O. Willis during an interview for the "Ciência Hoje" magazine. Photo from Y. Oniki archives.

(*W. poecilonota*) and Xingu Scale-backed Antbird (*W. vidua*) which were subject to his seminal studies.

It is important to note that his work on army ant followers was not his only research avenue. Professor Willis was one of the pioneers to work on avian responses to habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation. These interests intensified, especially after 1982, when he returned to Brazil and became professor at the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) in Rio Claro. At UNESP he devoted himself to these and other studies until he retired in 2005, but this did not mark the end of his career in science, which he continued through the Instituto de Estudos da Natureza founded by him and his wife; the renowned researcher Dr. Yoshika Oniki Willis. His work on land-use change was not confined to forest

remnants in São Paulo, but also extended north to Bahia and, above all, Espírito Santo. His primary concern was of the risk of the extinction of the region's rare and endemic species, and the replacement of these over time by generalist species, due to the strong area and edge effects in the few remaining forest fragments. His work has been extremely important in proving an evidence-based baseline for conservation practitioners for medium and long term monitoring. His findings always emphasized the pressing need to protect the most sensitive remnants and the unique biota they host.

Among the books he authored, there is perhaps most famously "*Aves do Estado de São Paulo*" co-authored with his wife. This work dealt with 770 bird species recorded across several decades in numerous expeditions to all corners of the state. The thoroughness and care with which all the information was distilled musters a profound admiration for his unstinting professionalism and drive for scientific legitimacy. This voluminous work will only become more important in the future given the widespread loss of native vegetation across much of the state. Another concern of Professor Willis was to see greater visibility for Brazilian ornithological research, much of which is important, but poorly accessible. To overcome these limitations him and his wife compiled the "*Bibliografia das Aves do Brasil: 1500 – 2002*", which was published in 2002. These are but two of his many contributions to the natural sciences throughout his extensive career which stretch to 237 scientific articles (many of which were published in *The Auk*, *Condor* and the *Wilson Bulletin*), six books, 15 book chapters and seven full papers in conference proceedings. Besides working as a professor at UNESP he also spent time as a visiting fellow at San Diego State College, Washington University, Oberlin College, Princeton University, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, and the University of Miami. This trajectory across many important higher education institutions left a mark on him and instilled a responsibility as extremely dedicated lecturer on vertebrate zoology and animal behavior. His work with and influence on graduate students was no less dedicated and, besides teaching a field ornithology discipline, he trained many MSc and PhD students who are now spread throughout Brazil, many continuing their ornithology work, especially in public institutions. It also merits noting the affection and value that he regarded local environmental knowledge which he sought in the many expeditions that made in Brazil and across the world. He always took extensive notes with great interest and curiosity when talking to local people and hearing what they had to say about nature in general and birds in particular. At the end of an exhausting day of work collecting data, he always took the time to record this information in his diaries, which contained all the important information about his day's

research spent away from home. Many of these anecdotal observations have been preserved for posterity in his extensive bibliography. Professor Willis leaves us nostalgic and grateful for his invaluable scientific contributions and teaching of ornithology, not forgetting to mention his broader efforts in nature conservation and above all his exemplary perseverance, without ever losing either his enthusiasm or his good mood! We wish all the comfort and consolation to his wife Yoshika Oniki Willis and daughter Michelle.

The complete list of E. O. Willis' publications in chronological order is followed:

- 1949. Fall field trip to St. Francis Sanctuary. *Maryland Birdlife* 5: 66.
- 1951. A nesting study of Purple Grackles at Middle River, Maryland. *Maryland Birdlife* 7: 3-7.
- 1952. Summary of Maryland nesting records, 1951. *Maryland Birdlife* 8: 35-43.
- 1954a. Summary of Maryland nest records, 1952. *Maryland Birdlife* 10(1):2-10.
- 1954b. Summary of Maryland nest records, 1953. *Maryland Birdlife* 10(2/3): 27-36.
- 1954c. Pasture with stream (Winter Bird Census 16). *Audubon Field Notes* 8: 279-280.
- 1954d. Stubble fields (strip cropped). (Winter Bird Census 17). *Audubon Field Notes* 8: 280.
- 1955a. Maryland nest summary for 1954. *Maryland Birdlife* 11(2): 3-11.
- 1955b. Pasture with stream (Winter Bird Census 17). *Audubon Field Notes* 9: 299.
- 1955c. Stubble fields (strip cropped). (Winter Bird Census 18). *Audubon Field Notes* 9: 299-300.
- 1956a. Pasture with stream (Winter Bird Census 15). *Audubon Field Notes* 10: 293-294.
- 1956b. Stubble fields (strip cropped). (Winter Bird Census 16). *Audubon Field Notes* 10: 294.
- 1960a. Red-crowned Ant-Tanagers, Tawny-crowned Greenlets and forest flocks. *Wilson Bulletin* 72: 105-106.
- 1960b. A study of the foraging behavior of two species of ant-tanagers. *Auk* 77: 150-170.
- 1960c. Ivory-billed Woodhewer feeds on mud flat. *Auk* 77: 354-355.
- 1960d. Voice, courtship, and territorial behavior of ant-tanagers in British Honduras. *Condor* 62: 73-87.
- 1961a. Prairie Warbler off the Pacific coast of Guatemala. *Condor* 63: 419.
- 1961b. A study of nesting ant-tanagers in British Honduras. *Condor* 63: 479-503.
- 1962a. Another nest of *Pitangus lictor*. *Auk* 79: 111.
- 1962b. An analysis of testosterone-induced crowing in young domestic cockerels. *Animal Behavior* 10: 48-54. (P. Marler, M. Kreith & E.O. Willis).
- 1963. Is the Zone-tailed Hawk a mimic of the Turkey Vulture? *Condor* 65: 313-317.

- 1966a. Ecology and behavior of the Crested Ant-Tanager. *Condor* 68: 56-71.
- 1966b. A prey capture by the Zone-tailed Hawk. *Condor* 68: 104-105.
- 1966c. Notes on a display and nest of the Club-winged Manakin. *Auk* 83: 475-476.
- 1966d. Competitive exclusion and birds at fruiting trees in western Colombia. *Auk* 83: 479-480.
- 1966e. The role of migrant birds at swarms of army ants. *Living Bird* 5: 187-231.
- 1966f. Interspecific competition and the foraging behavior of Plain-brown Woodcreepers. *Ecology* 47: 667-672.
1967. The behavior of Bicolored Antbirds. *Univ. Calif. Publ. in Zoology* 79: 1-132.
- 1968a. Taxonomy and behavior of Pale-faced Antbirds. *Auk* 85: 253-264.
- 1968b. Studies of the behavior of Lunulated and Salvin's Antbirds. *Condor* 70: 128-148.
- 1969a. Szasz on battered children. *Atlantic Monthly*, Jan., p. 36.
- 1969b. The Writing on the Wall. Voice of the People, Post-Intelligencer, Seattle. Saturday, 4 January, no. 106 (4):6.
- 1969c. On the behavior of five species of *Rhegmatorhina*, ant-following antbirds of the Amazon basin. *Wilson Bulletin* 81: 363-395.
- 1969d. Review, Alexander F. Skutch "Life Histories of Central American Highland Birds". *Auk* 86: 363-365.
1970. Review of Robert E. Ricklefs' "An analysis of nesting mortality in birds". *Auk* 87: 826-828.
- 1972a. Breeding of the White-plumed Antbird (*Pithys albifrons*). *Auk* 89: 192-193.
- 1972b. The behavior of Plain-brown Woodcreepers, *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*. *Wilson Bulletin* 84: 377-420.
- 1972c. The behavior of Spotted Antbirds. *A. O. U. Monographs* 10: 1-162.
- 1972d. Do birds flock in Hawaii, a land without predators? *California Birds* 3(1): 1-8.
- 1972e. Taxonomy, ecology and behavior of the Sooty Ant-Tanager and other ant-tanagers. *Am. Mus. Novitates* 2480: 1-38.
- 1972f. Studies of ant-following birds north of the eastern Amazon. *Acta Amazônica* 2: 127-151 (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1972g. Ecology and nesting behavior of the Chestnut-backed Antbird, *Myrmeciza exsul*. *Condor* 74: 87-98 (E.O. Willis & Y. Oniki).
- 1973a. Survival rates for visited and unvisited nests of Bicolored Antbirds. *Auk* 90: 263-267.
- 1973b. Local distribution of mixed flocks in Puerto Rico. *Wilson Bulletin* 85: 75-77.
- 1973c. Social behaviour, animal. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 15th ed., 16: 933-946.
- 1973d. The behavior of Ocellated Antbirds. *Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology* 144: 1-57.
- 1974a. Populations and local extinctions of birds on Barro Colorado Island, Panama. *Ecological Monographs* 44: 153-169.
- 1974b. Review, Alan J. Feduccia, "Evolutionary Trends in the neotropical Ovenbirds and Woodhewers". *Wilson Bulletin* 86(4): 487-489.
1975. Applied biogeography. Pp. 522-534, M.L. Cody & J. Diamond, eds., *Ecology and Evolution of Communities*, Belknap Press of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (E. O. Wilson & E. O. Willis).
- 1976a. A possible reason for mimicry of a bird-eating hawk by an insect-eating kite. *Auk* 93: 841-842.
- 1976b. Similarity of a tanager (*Orchesticus abeillei*) and an ovenbird (*Philydor rufus*): a possible case of mimicry. *Ciência e Cultura* 28: 1492-1493.
- 1976c. Effects of a cold wave on an Amazonian avifauna in the upper Paraguay drainage, western Mato Grosso, with comments on oscine-suboscine relationships. *Acta Amazônica* 6: 379-394.
- 1976d. Seasonal changes in the invertebrate litter fauna on Barro Colorado Island, Panama. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 36: 643-657.
- 1976e. Similarity of a tyrant flycatcher and a silky-flycatcher: not all character convergence is competitive mimicry. *Condor* 78: 553.
1977. Lista preliminar das aves da parte noroeste e áreas vizinhas da Reserva Ducke, Amazonas, Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 37: 585-601.
- 1978a. On behavior and nesting of McConnell's Flycatcher (*Pipromorpha macconnelli*): does female rejection lead to male promiscuity? *Auk* 94: 1-8. (E. O. Willis, D. Wechsler & Y. Oniki).
- 1978b. Birds and army ants. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 9: 243-263 (E.O. Willis & Y. Oniki).
- 1978c. On the clubbing strategies of tropical trees: do they top the opposition? *Evolutionary Theory* 3: 300.
- 1978d. Woodcreepers, Pp. 167-168, C. J. O. Harrison, ed., *Bird Families of the World*. Elsevier, Lausanne, Switzerland.
- 1978e. Antbirds, Pp. 170-172, C. J. O. Harrison, ed., *Bird Families of the World*. Elsevier, Lausanne, Switzerland.
- 1979a. Comportamento e ecologia da mãe-de-taóca, *Phlegopsis nigromaculata* (D'Orbigny & Lafresnaye) (Aves, Formicariidae). *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 39(1): 117-159.
- 1979b. Commentary (on lek evolution). *Condor* 81: 324.
- 1979c. The composition of avian communities in remanent woodlots in southern Brazil. *Papéis Avulsos de Zoologia*, S. Paulo 33: 1-25.
- 1979d. Behavior and ecology of two forms of White-chinned Woodcreepers (*Dendrocincla merula*, Dendrocolaptidae) in Amazonia. *Papéis Avulsos Zool.*, S. Paulo 33(2): 27-66.
- 1979e. A revised list of birds of Barro Colorado Island, Panama. *Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology* 291: 1-31 (E.O. Willis & E. Eisenmann).
- 1979f. A nest of the Collared Gnatwren (*Microbates collaris*). *Condor* 81: 101-102. (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1980a. A nest of the Ringed Gnatpiper (*Corythopsis torquata*). *Wilson Bulletin* 92: 216-217. (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1980b. Ecological roles of migratory and resident birds on Barro Colorado Island, Panama. Pp. 205-225, A. Keast and E.S. Morton eds., *Migrant birds in the neotropics: ecology, behavior, distribution, and conservation*. Smith. Inst. Press. Washington, D.C., 576 pp.
- 1980c. Species reduction in remanent woodlots in southern Brazil. *Acta. Congr. Int. Orn.* 17: 783-786.

- 1981a. Levantamento preliminar de aves em treze áreas do Estado de São Paulo. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 41: 121-135. (E.O. Willis & Y. Oniki).
- 1981b. Precautions in calculating nest success. *Ibis* 123: 204-207.
- 1981c. Is a species an interbreeding unit or an internally similar part of a phylogenetic tree? *Syst. Zool.* 30: 84-85.
- 1981d. Notes on the Slender Antbird. *Wilson Bulletin* 93: 103-107. (E.O. Willis & Y. Oniki).
- 1981e. Antbirds. Proc. First Int. Birds in Captivity Symposium, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., 1978: 457-466.
- 1981f. *Momotus momota* and *Baryphthengus ruficapillus* (Momotidae) as army ant followers. *Ciência e Cultura* 33: 1636-1640.
- 1981g. Diversity in adversity: the behaviors of two subordinate antbirds. *Arquivos de Zoologia*, S. Paulo 30(3): 1-77.
- 1981h. New Brazilian records for the Golden Parakeet (*Aratinga guarouba*). *Auk* 98: 394-396 (D.C. Oren & E.O. Willis).
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- 1982b. The behavior of Black-headed Antbirds (*Percnostola rufifrons*, Formicariidae). *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 42: 233-247.
- 1982c. *Notharchus puffbirds* (Aves, Bucconidae) as army ant followers. *Ciência e Cultura* 34: 777-782.
- 1982d. Amazonian *Bucco* and *Monasa* (Bucconidae) as army ant followers. *Ciência e Cultura* 34: 782-785.
- 1982e. *Malacoptila puffbirds* (Aves, Bucconidae) as army ant followers. *Ciência e Cultura* 34: 924-928.
- 1982f. The behavior of Black-banded Woodcreepers (*Dendrocolaptes picumnus*). *Condor* 84: 272-285.
- 1982g. The behavior of Scale-backed Antbirds. *Wilson Bulletin* 94: 447-462.
- 1982h. Poblaciones y extinciones de aves em la isla de Barro Colorado em Panama. Pp. 131-153, G. A. de Alba & R.W. Rubinoff, eds., *Evolucion em los Tropicos*, STRI, Panama, 291 pp.
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- 1982j. Breeding records of birds from Manaus, Brazil. II. Apodidae to Furnariidae. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 42: 745-752 (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1982k. Breeding records of birds from Manaus, Brazil. III. Formicariidae to Pipridae. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 42: 563-569 (Y. Oniki & E. O. Willis).
- 1982l. The behavior of Red-billed Woodcreepers (*Hylexetastes perrotti*). *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 42: 655-666.
- 1982m. Ground-cuckoos (Aves, Cuculidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 42: 753-756.
- 1982n. *Galbula albirostris* (Aves, Galbulidae), *Trogon rufus* (Trogonidae), and *Electron platyrinchum* (Momotidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 42: 761-766 (E.O. Willis, D. Wechsler & S. Kistler).
- 1983a. *Thamnophilus doliatus* (Batara Barreteado, Barred Antshrike). Pp. 607-608, D. H. Janzen, ed., *Costa Rican Natural History*, Univ. Chicago Press, Chicago, 816 pp.
- 1983b. Antbirds (Hormigueros, various genera). Pp. 546-547, D. H. Janzen, ed., *Costa Rican Natural History*, Univer. Chicago Press, Chicago, 816 pp.
- 1983c. Breeding records of birds from Manaus, Brazil. IV. Tyrannidae to Vireonidae. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 45-54 (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1983d. Breeding records of birds from Manaus, Brazil. V. Icteridae to Fringillidae. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 55-64 (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1983e. Tinamous, chickens, guans, rails and trumpeters as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 19-22.
- 1983f. Forest-falcons, hawks, and a pygmy-owl as ant-followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 23-28 (E.O. Willis, D. Wechsler & F.G. Stiles).
- 1983g. *Piaya* cuckoos (Aves, Cuculidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 29-32.
- 1983h. Anis (Aves, Cuculidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 33-36.
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- 1983k. Trans-andean *Xiphorhynchus* (Aves, Dendrocolaptidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 125-131.
- 1983l. Cis-andean *Xiphorhynchus* and relatives (Aves, Dendrocolaptidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 43: 133-142.
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- 1983o. A study of breeding birds of the Belém area, Brazil. III. Trogonidae to Furnariidae. *Ciência e Cultura* 35: 1320-1324 (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1983p. A study of breeding birds of the Belém area, Brazil. IV. Formicariidae to Pipridae. *Ciência e Cultura* 35: 1325-1329 (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1983q. A study of breeding birds of the Belém area, Brazil. V. Troglodytidae to Coerebidae. *Ciência e Cultura* 35: 1875-1880 (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1983r. A study of breeding birds of the Belém area, Brazil. VI. Tyrannidae. *Ciência e Cultura* 35: 1880-1885. (Y. Oniki & E.O. Willis).
- 1983s. A study of ant-following birds of northeastern Brazil. *National Geographic Society Research Reports* (Washington, D.C.) 15: 745-748 (E.O. Willis & Y. Oniki).
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- 1983u. On the behavior of Rufous Gnateaters (*Conopophaga lineata*, Formicariidae). *Naturalia*, São Paulo 8: 67-83 (E.O. Willis, Y. Oniki & W.R. Silva).
- 1983v. Toucans (Ramphastidae) and Hornbills (Bucerotidae) as ant followers. *Le Gerfaut* 73: 239-242.

- 1983w. Flycatchers, Cotingas, and Drongos (Tyrannidae, Muscicapidae, Cotingidae, and Dicruridae) as ant followers. *Le Gerfaut* 73: 265-280.
- 1983x. Wrens, gnatwrens, rockfowl, babblers and shrikes (Troglodytidae, Polioptilidae, Picathartidae, Timaliidae, and Laniidae) as ant followers. *Le Gerfaut* 73: 393-404.
- 1983y. Jays, mimids, icterids, and bulbuls (Corvidae, Mimidae, Icteridae and Pycnonotidae) as ant followers. *Le Gerfaut* 73: 379-392.
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- 1984f. *Hylophylax*, *Hypocnemoides*, and *Myrmoderus* (Aves, Formicariidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Zoologia*, S. Paulo 2: 159-164.
- 1984g. *Phlegopsis erythroptera* (Gould, 1855) and relatives (Aves, Formicariidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Zoologia*, S. Paulo 2: 165-170.
- 1984h. *Dysithamnus* and *Thamnomanes* (Aves, Formicariidae) as army ant followers. *Papéis Avulsos de Zoologia*, S. Paulo 35: 183-187.
- 1984i. Antshrikes (Aves, Formicariidae) as army ant followers. *Papéis Avulsos de Zoologia*, S. Paulo 35: 177-182.
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- 1985b. *Cercomacra* and related antbirds (Aves, Formicariidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Zoologia* 2: 427-432.
- 1985c. *Myrmeciza* and related antbirds (Aves, Formicariidae) as army ant followers. *Revista Brasileira de Zoologia* 2: 433-442.
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- 1985e. Surveys of African ant-following birds. *National Geographic Society Research Reports* 21: 515-518.
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- 1985i. Ecoetologia das aves. Anais III Encontro Paulista de Etologia, Ribeirão Preto: 35-44.
- 1986a. West African thrushes as safari ant followers. *Le Gerfaut* 76: 95-108.
- 1986b. Vireos, wood warblers and warblers as ant followers. *Le Gerfaut* 76: 177-186.
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- 1986e. Notas sobre a distribuição de quatro espécies de aves da Amazônia Brasileira. *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Zoologia* 2: 151-158 (J.M.C. Silva & E.O. Willis).
- 1986f. Diversidade de aves em áreas remanescentes de vegetação natural. Anais do X Simpósio Anual da CIESP 2(50): 91-99.
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