Snailfishes of the Careproctus rastrinus complex (Liparidae): redescriptions of seven species in the North Pacific Ocean region, with the description of a new species from the Beaufort Sea

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Table of contents

Abstract .......................................................... 301
Introduction ..................................................... 302
Material and methods ......................................... 306
Systematic accounts ............................................ 307
    Careproctus rastrinus Gilbert & Burke 1912 .................. 307
    Careproctus trachysoma Gilbert & Burke 1912 ............... 316
    Careproctus scottae Chapman & DeLacy 1934 ............... 318
    Careproctus acanthodes Gilbert & Burke 1912 ............... 320
    Careproctus pellucidus Gilbert & Burke 1912 ............... 324
    Careproctus phasma Gilbert 1896 ................................ 326
    Careproctus spectrum Bean 1890 ............................... 330
    Careproctus lerikimae new species ............................ 331
Principal component analysis ................................ 334
Discussion ....................................................... 337
Key to the species of the Careproctus rastrinus complex 337
Non-type material examined .................................. 338
Acknowledgments ............................................... 344
Literature cited ................................................. 345

Abstract

Herein we review and recognize as valid all previously described species of the Careproctus rastrinus complex based on morphological evidence, provide diagnoses and descriptions of all species, describe a new species from the Beaufort Sea, and address the misapplication of several names throughout the area. In particular, the name C. rastrinus is restricted to populations of the western Pacific and is known conclusively only from the Sea of Okhotsk. Careproctus acanthodes, from the Sea of Japan and Sea of Okhotsk, and C. pellucidus, from the Pacific Ocean side of northern Japan, are resurrected from synonymy with C. rastrinus. Populations of the eastern Pacific previously routinely identified as C. rastrinus are recognized under two names: C. scottae, a name that is applied to deeper water Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and eastern Pacific populations having a postorbital pore, and Careproctus phasma, applied to shallow water populations of the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska lacking a postorbital pore. Although we consider Careproctus spectrum valid, the species has been routinely misidentified and is presently known only from the type series. Careproctus lerikimae is a new species described from the Beaufort Sea, diagnosed from other species of the C. rastrinus complex by the absence of the postorbital pore and higher median fin and vertebral counts.

Key words: Teleostei, Alaska, Japan, Russia, deep-water, molecular, morphology, Careproctus rastrinus, Careproctus scottae, Careproctus acanthodes, Careproctus pellucidus, Careproctus trachysoma, Careproctus spectrum, Careproctus lerikimae n. sp.