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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
<i>Careproctus rastrinus</i> Gilbert & Burke 1912	307
<i>Careproctus trachysoma</i> Gilbert & Burke 1912	316
<i>Careproctus scottae</i> Chapman & DeLacy 1934	318
<i>Careproctus acanthodes</i> Gilbert & Burke 1912	320
<i>Careproctus pellucidus</i> Gilbert & Burke 1912	324
<i>Careproctus phasma</i> Gilbert 1896	326
<i>Careproctus spectrum</i> Bean 1890	330
<i>Careproctus lerikimae</i> new species	331
Principal component analysis	334
Discussion	337
Key to the species of the <i>Careproctus rastrinus</i> 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 phasma*, *Careproctus acanthodes*, *Careproctus pellucidus*, *Careproctus trachysoma*, *Careproctus spectrum*, *Careproctus lerikimae* n. sp.