On the synonymy of *Caristius groenlandicus* Jensen and *Pteraclis fasciatus* Borodin (Pisces: Caristiidae)

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Abstract

Manefishes of the family Caristiidae are rare meso-bathypelagic oceanic fishes with numerous problems regarding their species-level taxonomy. We revisit Hartel and Triant’s assertion (*Copeia*, 1998, 746) that *Pteraclis fasciatus* Borodin and *Caristius groenlandicus* Jensen are synonyms. We found additional support for this idea in the modification of the ventral unbranched caudal-fin rays. We conclude that the names are synonyms and that *fasciatus* has priority over *groenlandicus* because the former is the older name.

Introduction

Manefishes of the family Caristiidae are rare oceanic fishes with the adults living in the meso- and bathypelagic zone of all ocean basins (Post 1986). The conspicuously banded juveniles have been reported from the epi- and mesopelagial, sometimes in association with siphonophores (Janssen *et al.* 1989). Manefishes are medium sized, usually reaching around 30 cm, with a deep laterally strongly compressed body, large eyes, a sail-like dorsal fin and long pelvic fins which, when folded, can be housed in a mid-ventral groove between the pelvic girdle and the anal fin (Post 1986).

The number of genera and species in the family and their precise distribution has remained in a confused state, a fact acknowledged by most recent authors (Post 1986, Tolley *et al.* 1990, Moser 1996, Tweddle & Anderson 2008). This changed only recently, when Stevenson and Kenaley (2011) published the first part of a revision of Caristiidae, which dealt with the small-mouthed manefish taxa. The remaining caristids, the so-called large-mouthed species, currently comprise five nominal species: *Caristius macropus* Bellotti, *C. japonicus* Gill & Smith, *Platyberyx opalescens* Zugmayer, *Pteraclis fasciatus* Borodin and *C. groenlandicus* Jensen, plus the two recently described by Kukuev *et al.* (2012), ‘*C. andriashevi*’ and ‘*Platyberyx mauli*’, the names of which are not available.

One species of the large-mouthed caristids, *Caristius groenlandicus*, was described by Jensen (1941) from the Davis Strait near Greenland based on a single specimen of 172 mm total length taken at 1660 m depth. This species has been reported subsequently from Atlantic waters off Canada (Scott *et al.* 1970), but the name has also been applied to specimens from the Southern Ocean (e.g. Brickle & Laptikhovsky 2002). Ten years prior to Jensen’s (1941) description, Borodin (1930, 1931) reported on a collection of deep-sea fishes caught in the western North Atlantic between Woods Hole and Bermuda. Among the sample were two small specimens of 14 and 36 mm total length collected at 1500 m depth, which Borodin (1930) described as a new species in the bramid genus *Pteraclis*. Borodin’s (1930) description and the two type specimens seem to have been completely overlooked and *P. fasciatus* does not appear, for example, in the comprehensive revision of the family Bramidae by Mead (1972). An examination of the two syntypes of *P. fasciatus* by Hartel and Triant (1998) revealed that they are not members of the family Bramidae, but a species of the manefish family Caristiidae. Hartel and Triant (1998) reported that the number of dorsal- and anal-fin rays of the two type specimens of *P. fasciatus* are matched only by those of *C. groenlandicus* among the Atlantic caristiid species and suggested that the two are conspecific.