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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 caristiids, 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 maui*', the names of which are not available.

One species of the large-mouthed caristiids, *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 & Laptikhovskiy 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 1500m 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.