LITHOTHAMNION SPECIES (HAPALIDIALES, RHODOPHYTA) IN THE ARCTIC AND SUBARCTIC: PROVIDING A SYSTEMATICS FOUNDATION IN A TIME OF RAPID CLIMATE CHANGE

Viviana Peña1, David Bélanger2, Patrick Gagnon3, Joseph L. Richards4, Line Le Gall5, Jeffery R. Hughey6, Gary W. Saunders7, Sandra C. Lindstrom8, Eli Rinde9, Vivian Husa10, Hartvig Christie9, Stein Fredriksen11, Jason M. HallSpencer12, Robert S. Steneck13, Kathryn M. Schoenrock14, Janne Gitmark9, Ellen Sofie Grefsrud10, Marc B. Anglès d’Auriac9, Erwann Legrand11, Jacques Grall15, Thomas M. Mumford16, Nicholas A. Kamenos17, Paul W. Gabrielson18

1 Universidad de A Coruña, BioCost Research Group, Facultad de Ciencias and Centro de Investigaciones Científicas Avanzadas (CICA), A Coruña, Spain;
2 Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of Biology, St. John’s, NL, Canada;
3 Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of Ocean Sciences, St. John’s, NL, Canada;
4 University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Biology Department, Lafayette, Louisiana, USA;
5 Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle, CNRS, Sorbonne Université, EPHE, Université des Antilles, Institut de Systématique, Évolution, Biodiversité (ISYEB), Paris, France;
6 Hartnell College, Division of Mathematics, Science, and Engineering, Salinas, CA, USA;
7 University of New Brunswick, Department of Biology, Centre for Environmental & Molecular Algal Research, Fredericton, NB, Canada;
8 University of British Columbia, Department of Botany and Beaty Biodiversity Museum, Vancouver, B.C, Canada;
9 Norwegian Institute for Water Research, Oslo, Norway;
10 Institute of Marine Research (IMR), Bergen, Norway;
11University of Oslo, Department of Biosciences, Oslo, Norway;
12 University of Plymouth, School of Biological and Marine Sciences, Plymouth, United Kingdom;
13University of Maine, School of Marine Sciences, Orono, ME, USA;
Coralline red algae in the genera *Clathromorphum*, *Phymatolithon* and *Lithothamnion* are important benthic ecosystem engineers in the photic zone of the Arctic and Subarctic. In these regions, the systematics and biogeography of *Clathromorphum* and *Phymatolithon* species have mostly been resolved whereas *Lithothamnion* species have not. Seventy-three specific and infraspecific names have been given to Arctic and Subarctic *Lithothamnion* specimens, the vast majority by Mikael H. Foslie in the late 19th and early 20th century. From the type specimens of 38 of these names, partial rbcL sequences were obtained that enabled us to correctly apply the earliest available names and to correctly place the remainder in synonymy.

Three of the four Arctic and Subarctic *Lithothamnion* species, *L. lemoineae*, *L. soriferum* and *L. tophiforme* were distinct based on all three sequenced genes, two plastid encoded, rbcL and psbA, and the mitochondrial encoded COI-5P; rbcL and COI-5P also segregated *L. glaciale* from *L. tophiforme* but psbA did not. Based on DNA sequences, morpho-anatomy and biogeography, we recognize all four species. It is difficult to identify these species based on morpho-anatomy and they can all occur as encrusting corallines, as rhodoliths or as maerl. We demonstrate the importance of sequencing these historical type specimens by showing that the recently proposed northeast Atlantic *L. erinaceum* is a synonym of one of the earliest published Arctic species of *Lithothamnion*, *L. soriferum*, itself incorrectly placed in synonymy under *L. tophiforme* based on morpho-anatomy. Based on sequenced specimens, we update the distributions and ecology of these species.

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