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Nomenclature of *Leptastacus germanica* Kuru, Martinez Arbizu et Rossel, 2015

(Copepoda: Harpacticoida: Leptastacidae)

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Until the study by Kuru et al. (2025), all *Leptastacus* specimens with a blunt, foot-like shape of the distal end of the fifth peraeopod were classified as *Leptastacus laticaudatus*. Kuru et al. (2025) split the taxon into a total of 5 separate species: *Leptastacus laticaudatus*, *Leptastacus linae*, *Leptastacus germanica*, *Leptastacus marleenae*, and *Leptastacus klaasi*. The morphological differences between these species are very slight, and potential intraspecific variability was not statistically analyzed in the study, but genetic differentiation is clearly present.

For one of the species decribed in Kuru et al. (2025), *Leptastacus germanica*, a nomenclatural comment is appropriate, however. Kuru et al. (2025) explain the species epithet as follows: "The specific epithet *germanica* is a Latinized adjective meaning 'of Germany.'". Thus, the authors explicitly state that the epithet is an adjective. According to ICZN Article 31.2 "a species-group name, if it is […] a Latin or latinized adjective […] must agree in gender with the generic name with which it is at any time combined". The wording "at any time" includes the original publication in which the name is established for the first time. The grammatical gender of the generic name *Leptastacus* can be established according to ICZN Article 30.1.1: "a genus-group name that is or ends in a Latin word takes the gender given for that word in standard Latin dictionaries; if it is a compound word formed from two or more components, the gender is given by the final component". The genus name *Leptastacus* is a compound word formed from the greek λεπτός (leptós) = "thin", "fine") and the Latin astacus, -i = "crayfish". The word astacus is the final component of that compound word, and has the masculine grammatical gender in standard Latin dictionaries. Alternatively, it could be argued that astacus is a loanword from greek ἀστᾰκός (ăstăkós) = "lobster, crayfish" and therefore is not a Latin or latinised word, but a (transliterated) Greek word. Its grammatical gender can then be established according to ICZN Article 30.1.3: "a genus-group name that is a Greek word latinized with change of ending […] takes the gender normally

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appropriate to the changed ending […]". The change of ending from -os (ăstăkós) to -us (astacus) thus defines the masculine grammatical gender.

In both interpretations, the grammatical gender of the genus name *Leptastacus* is masculine and the adjective germanicus, -a, -um must therefore also take the masculine grammatical gender. Thus, the original spelling *Leptastacus germanica* must be changed to *Leptastacus germanicus*, a so-called mandatory change.

Sources and references

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