

L10: 8d TUATARA TYPE (Recess)

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“New Zealand Stamps” by Campbell Paterson



Because of the existence of both upright and sideways watermarks in the various issues of this value the usual good standby of paper mesh as the most reliable aid to identification is here somewhat discredited. This is because a stamp having vertical mesh paper used sideways will have all the appearance of being on horizontal mesh paper. But in fact, with necessary reservations and changes of the usual routine we can still use mesh as our main guide.

The 8d Tuatara exists with single watermark sideways perf14x13½ L10a and with multiple watermark sideways in perfs 14x13½, 12½ and 14x14½ L10b, d, e.

There is also the one issue with multiple watermark upright perf14x13½ L10c. Now remembering that a vertical mesh paper used sideways has the mesh running horizontally across the stamp and vice versa, we should ignore the ‘odd man out’ L10c and treat all these stamps as having sideways watermarks.

Treated thus we can take all stamps with apparently vertical mesh and safely reckon these to have horizontal mesh. That done we will find that these stamps are either perf 14x13½ L10b, 12½ L10d or 14x14½ L10e. As L10e was always on the coarse wartime paper it is easily recognized without a perf gauge. The same applies to the 12½ perfs of L10d which are large and readily distinguishable from the neat perfs of L10b.

We have now left only the stamps having apparently horizontal mesh. Using the watermark detector or black tray used with “white spirit”, we can easily see that some of these stamps have sideways watermark and some have upright wmk. The upright watermark stamps are obviously all L10c, this being the only 8d issued that way, and the remainder will be all L10a the issue with sideways single watermark.

If this sounds all too easy that is because in fact it is easy! To the collector who can recognize the mesh of papers the identification of nearly all NZ stamps becomes a pleasure, not a trying bore.