

World Population of SACs

According to the available census data, the current population of *llamas* and *alpacas* is 6,276,396, distributed along the Andean *cordillera* with the zone of greatest concentration located between 11° S and 21° S. Despite the relatively small population of *llamas* and *alpacas*, they play a role of primary importance in the economy of the high Andean regions of Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. A very small population of *llamas* thrive in Ecuador where very recently the *alpaca* has been reintroduced.

Eighty-eight per cent of the world's 3,042,346 *alpaca* are found in Peru; likewise, the greatest percentage (62.5%) of the world's 3,234,050 *llama* are found in Bolivia. The rest of the South American population of domesticated camelids inhabit Chile, Argentina, and, a very few, inhabit Ecuador (Table 4). The highest population of *guanacos* is found in Argentina, where the estimated number is 600,000; in Chile there are an estimated 22,000 *guanacos*, while Peru and Bolivia have negligible populations. The *vicuna* population is distributed in Peru, with the highest population (107,421), Chile (27,900), Bolivia (13,000), and Argentina (15,000). At present, the *guanaco* and *vicuna* populations are probably larger than these estimates as a result of policies aimed at their protection. The exportation of hides from young *guanacos*, for instance, decreased from 86,062 in 1978 to 10,250 in 1984.

The population of SAC outside the Andean Region has not been very significant until now, but figures given by the exportation authorities from Chile and Bolivia, as well as the associations of *alpaca* and *llama* breeders in the USA, Canada, England, New Zealand, Australia, and other European countries, show that the population is significantly increasing in these countries. The number of *llama* in the USA is around 25,000 with a lesser number of *alpaca*; a similar number is said to exist in New Zealand.