

# How Many Alpaca are there in



by the Registry Working Group

In 2008 the Registry Group wrote an article in the New Zealand Alpaca Magazine about how many alpaca were in New Zealand at that time. This was followed by an article about the distribution of alpaca across New Zealand. Since then there has been no reporting on numbers so we thought it was about time we gave an update on how the New Zealand alpaca herd has grown.

These numbers are based on a copy of the IAR (International Alpaca Registry) in June 2012.

## So what's the answer?

**We estimate about 23,000.** In 2008 the answer was about 15,000. So the increase in number is only 8,000 over 4 years, proving that the alpaca industry is a slow growing one. The exponential growth many would have predicted in the alpaca population has simply never happened, this is good for the long term stability of the industry as we are able to grow our infrastructure slowly to keep pace and are unlikely to see the boom bust that other emerging industries have gone through.

simple assumption that progeny gender is 50% male 50% female. Therefore the number of males should roughly equal the number of females in the country.

What about unregistered females? This is a very tricky question to answer. We make the assumption that the number of unregistered females is much lower than the number of males and is balanced out by the number of females registered who are not longer active. We know that at any point in time the IAR is only as accurate as the data in it – there will be a number of alpaca that have been born but not registered yet, and to counter balance this there will be a number who have died and have not been updated. So for the purposes of reporting numbers we have to make the assumption that these numbers balance out and report numbers as estimates to the nearest thousand, hence our estimate of 23,000 alpaca in New Zealand.

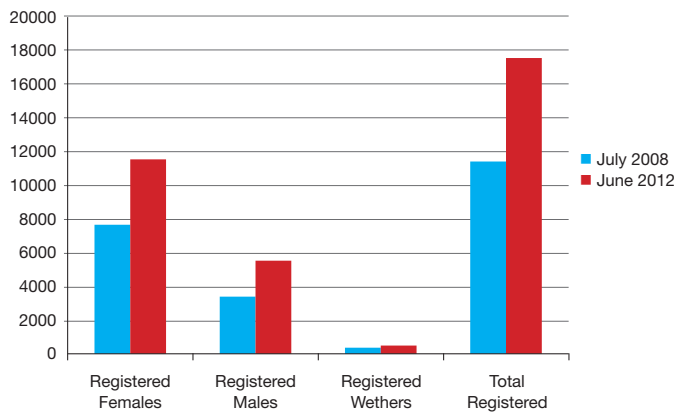


Figure 1. Registered alpaca in New Zealand 2008 v's 2012.

	Huacaya	Suri	Total
Registered Females	9,891	1,660	11,551
Registered Males	4,659	872	5,531
Registered Wethers	452	37	489
<b>Total Registered</b>	<b>15,002</b>	<b>2,569</b>	<b>17,571</b>
Estimated Unregistered Males	4,780	751	5,531
<b>Total Estimate</b>	<b>19,782</b>	<b>3,320</b>	<b>23,102</b>

Table 1. Estimated alpaca numbers in New Zealand.

By querying the IAR we can get the numbers of registered alpacas. But what about those that aren't registered? To determine this number we created estimates based on the

## Where are all the alpaca?

Now that we have an estimated number of alpaca in New Zealand we can investigate a bit further to see where they are distributed around the country.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of alpaca in each of the AANZ regions. This is further broken down into zones in table 2.

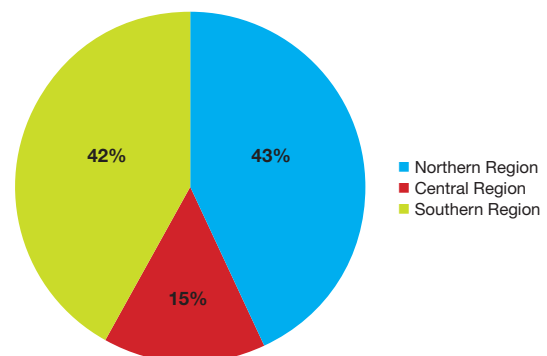


Figure 2. Registered alpaca numbers by region.

Zone	Registered Alpaca
Northland	664
North Auckland	2029
South Auckland	641
Coromandel	85
Waikato	1678
Bay of Plenty	1308
East Coast	160
Hawkes Bay	739
Central Plateau	192
Taranaki	302
Manawatu/Wanganui	1455
Wairarapa	350
Wellington	491
Nelson/Marlborough	784
Canterbury	4924
Otago	1104
Southland	249
Fiordland	114
West Coast	36
Other	266

Table 2. Registered alpaca by zone.

## Registered Births

The number of births registered on the IAR is showing a slight decline from the peak in 2008 to 2010, then a drop to 2011. The 2011 & 2012 figures are not really meaningful as AANZ members have up to 1 year to register births before penalty fees apply.

The decline in registrations may be for several difference reasons. Members may not be breeding as many females each year or may not be registering all births. More investigation into the reason would need to be made before any assumptions are made.

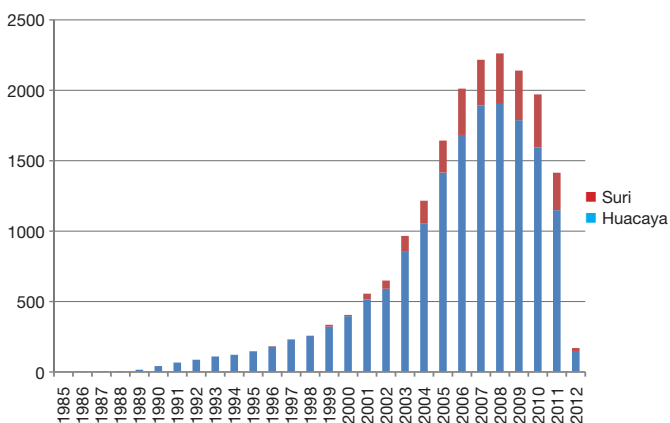


Figure 3. Number of alpaca births in New Zealand by year.

## Herd Size

The IAR database is also able to give us numbers of registered alpaca by the ownership herd code. This paints an interesting picture of the makeup of the alpaca industry ownership. The average herd size has not changed since 2008 staying at just 19 alpaca. There are still a high number of small herds registered, however these only make up a very small proportion of the total registered alpaca. Herds of less than 5 alpaca make up only 6% of the total numbers. As in 2008 the largest 20% of herds have just over 65% of the total alpaca.

	July 2008	June 2012
Total Registered Alpaca	11,423	17,571
Total No. Herds Registered	605	919
Average of Herd Size	19	19
Median of Herd Size	9	8
Mode of Herd Size	2	2

Table 3. Herd size statistics.

## Colour

Reporting by primary alpaca colour is potentially the biggest benefit of the IAR data. This information could be used to model the fibre production from New Zealand. A simple overview of the colour of registered huacaya and suri is shown in the following figures. Light fawn has been separated from white and the other fawns as it is a significant group on its own.

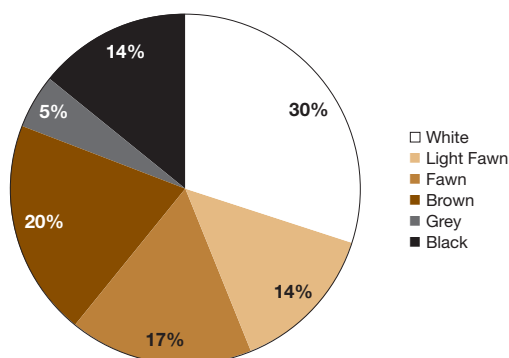


Figure 4. Registered Huacaya by colour group.

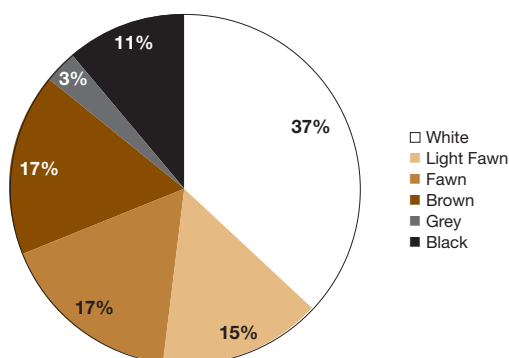


Figure 4. Registered Suri by colour group.

Investigating this data could be of use to you in your business or of casual interest either way we hope you enjoyed this brief look at the statistics behind the IAR. We hope to bring you more report soon.

## Keeping the data current!

You can help us report accurate information by keeping your herd details up to date.

- (1) Update the status of your alpacas. Ensure any that are inactive, dead, sold, or exported are recorded on the registry. Fill in the A6 form, found online, or request a hard copy from the AANZ office. Status updates are free of charge!
- (2) Register your cria as soon as possible, including males. Registrations are now very quick to complete using the online registration system... and it saves you money!
- (3) Periodically check your herd listing online. Make sure all the data is correct and up to date.