

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

Question No. 76

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 17 February 2006:

Please provide the sighting figures of illegal fishing vessels for the past two years.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

In 2004 the combined total was 9,639 reports of sightings of foreign fishing vessels and in 2005 combined sightings of foreign fishing vessels by Customs and ADF aircraft totalled 13,018.

These figures do not represent the actual number of vessels fishing illegally as, in areas of concentrated aerial surveillance, the same vessel may be sighted and counted by multiple flights. Additionally, from the air it is sometimes difficult to discern with accuracy whether a vessel is fishing illegally or is legitimately transiting Australian waters.