



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

giriga

'gir-i-ga'



SCHOOL
YEARS
K-3

Background

A duck 'catching' game was played by little boys and girls at Cape Bedford, Cooktown and the McIvor regions in north Queensland. This game was recorded by Walter Roth in the early 1900s.

Language

The game is called *giriga*, which means 'play' in the Yidiny language of the Cairns–Yarrabah region.

Short description

This is a role-play, running-and-chasing tag game suitable for younger children.

Players

- A group of four to eight or more players

Playing area

- A suitable area with a designated 'home' area

Game play and basic rules

- One of the players takes a long 'stick' (a swimming 'noodle' works well), and holding it up at an angle, allows the far end to touch the ground. This represents a man catching ducks by means of a slip-noose attached to the end of a long slender rod. The other players circle round and round, bobbing underneath the stick in single file (one behind the other).
- The player with the stick suddenly drops the stick down in front of a player who will be considered 'caught'. This player has to lie down on his or her back, perfectly still, and with eyes closed. Players in the game are 'caught' until they are all lying in a row.
- The child with the stick comes up to the first 'duck' and says, 'Where do you come from?' 'I come from Yarrabah' is the reply.
- 'Well, then, go home to Yarrabah,' says the player with the stick and with a light touch from the

stick the 'duck' gets up on his or her feet and runs away 'home'.

- Continue in the same manner for all the other players.

Variations

- The catcher is blindfolded when he or she catches the 'ducks'.
- Play music as the players move around in a circle. When it stops the stick drops down to catch the 'duck'.
- All the players run home after the 'catcher' asks one of them where he or she comes from.

Teaching points

- Circle round and round.
- Caught. Lie down on your back.
- Go for home.
- Safe at home (or touched)