

GONDOLER@S SUP CLUB

"**Gondoler@s Sup Club**" is a sports club integrated within the Surfing Federation that was established in July 2020 and carries out its activity mainly in the province of Alicante (Spain).

How did the idea of creating the club begin?

The club was born as a result of a personal project, called "Diarios del Mar"; several people who agree with their values, propose me to meet and do paddle surf activities, which leads to a sports club.

The main pillars of the club are to spread through social networks, and our activities, the objectives of caring for nature, promoting health and healthy habits and water sports as a vehicle to achieve the above.

I saw that there were many schools and associated clubs that had a very sporty and less social approach. So what differentiated us from what there was to choose from in the province of Alicante was the mixture of the two aspects: social objectives and sporting objectives.

What are the main objectives of the club?

The main objectives of the club are:

- The practice of Stand Up Paddle, Surf and other water sports.
- The care and conservation of nature.
- The promotion of health and healthy habits.

We believe that it makes little sense to practice a sport in nature and not take care of it.

Can you tell us about some of the initiatives or projects you carry out?

We have several ongoing projects that are fixed throughout the year. We do guided tours with an environmental objective, paddle surf courses and classes, courses and classes with people with functional diversity, coexistence and in parallel, my personal project "Diarios del Mar".

Project: "Guided tours".

The guided tours are carried out with an environmental objective, in which people are made aware of the flora and fauna of the area in which the activity is done, a collection of plastics in the maritime environment that we travel, at the same time practicing sport.

In one of the tours we collected funds (sponsorship/crowdfunding) to support a report on the awareness of the monk seal, an endangered species, which was present on the coast of Alicante until about 1950.

How did this initiative come about?

This initiative was born from the objectives of the club and the people who form it. In the videos that I put on social networks about my personal project I always explained a bit of history, the natural values of the area and the driving of the paddle surf board. The people who contacted me liked the way I did things and that's where the idea of guided tours came from.

What are the main objectives of this initiative?

The main objectives are that people get to know the environment in which they are practicing sport, learn about its flora, fauna, the ecosystem..., that they learn to do sport in nature respecting it. In short, awareness and respect for the environment.

Who are the target groups in this initiative?

The general public, from young people to the elderly, people with functional diversity, etc.

What challenges emerged during the implementation of this initiative?

Although we receive some subsidies for some of our projects, we don't get a lot of help from the administration, not only in the economic aspect, but also in the facilitation of things.

This summer we have had many problems to be able to develop our activity in the localities where we usually carry them out because there are a series of administrative obstacles that do not make any sense.

You can not access the beach anywhere other than the navigation channel when what we carry is not a boat, it is a support to the flotation. That is to say, legally the paddle surf board is the same as a float.

We think it is very good that it is regulated so that there are no accidents, but the system should be easier, more guided by common sense and coexistence and less bureaucratic.

How are they addressed?

We are trying to ask for the necessary permits to be able to carry out the activities and promote initiatives to solve these obstacles, together with other clubs in the area.

What is the impact of the initiative on the target groups and how do you measure this impact if you measure it at all?

We believe that the impact we have is very small, only at the local level, but these people are getting the message across. Many of the people who have participated in the cleanup tours end up becoming members because they share the club's goals.

Are there partners involved in the initiative? Where is the funding coming from?

The funding for this activity comes from membership dues and from the people who sign up for the activity, who have to pay the dues.

How can this program be sustainable?

With more funding we could have more means to fulfill the social objective which is dissemination, awareness, cleaning, etc. There is a lot of free work from many people but to achieve the social objectives more things are needed.

Project: "Diarios del Mar"

"Diarios del Mar" is a video blog where I collect, the crossings, the personal challenges that I carry out, and where I give advice on paddle surfing (what type of boards to choose, how to make a route, technical aspects ..., and above all safety) at the same time that environmental awareness is addressed.

My first challenge was to cover the 73 km of the "Marina Alta", from Denia to Altea, in total autonomy, that is, carrying water, food, stove, sleeping bag, etc., on the board.

Last year I did the challenge from Jávea to Ibiza of 100km talking about the Posidonia oceanica (aquatic plant, endemic to the Mediterranean).

How did this initiative come about?

I was working as a forest fireman and was an amateur mountaineer. One day while climbing I fell from a height of 9m to the ground and had a very serious accident that affected both my legs.

In the process of recovery from that accident there were many months of hospitalization, operations, but there came a time when I could stand up and then I asked my physiotherapist if I could paddle surf.

When I was mountaineering I lived in the north of Spain and I started to do some surfing. After the accident, I thought: "maybe now I could consider paddle surfing" and my physiotherapist told me to try it as it would be very good for my recovery.

As my sick leave was going to be long I took for 2 years as a personal project to navigate the entire province of Alicante, little by little, in small sections.

When I started with the project I was not yet able to walk a long distance. I went with my van, limped to the shore, and sometimes I went on foot and sometimes sitting on the board, but it was good for me.

Everything evolved and led me to my first challenge, which is to run the 73 km of the "Marina Alta". Last year I did the Ibiza challenge. From the Ibiza challenge, the paddle surfing classes and courses were born.

When I started my first crossings with the aim of touring the province of Alicante I realized that there is no explanation on the internet or in print media to know how to make a paddle surf route, what were the best places to access, etc.. So I decided to do it myself; that is "Diarios del Mar", a video blog where I explain this kind of things.

What are the main objectives of this initiative?

In all the crossings I do, I always talk about the natural values of the area, respect for the environment, environmental awareness and spread paddle surfing as a sport with values and a social objective.

Links:

* Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Gondoleras>

* Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/gondolerassupclub/>

* YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFgefXAJxdrZhF_li4csyG