Press Release: Deep/Quest 2 Expeditions and Nature Canada call on governments to designate Eastern Lake Ontario a National Marine Park.

KINGSTON, ON — September 22, 2026 — Today, marine exploration group Deep/Quest 2 Expeditions and leading conservation charity Nature Canada issued a joint call to the federal and provincial governments to immediately advance the designation of Eastern Lake Ontario as a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA).

The coalition urges federal Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature Julie Dabrusin and Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Todd McCarthy to formally initiate a comprehensive feasibility study to safeguard one of Canada's most vital yet under-protected freshwater ecosystems.

While the United States designated its side of the waters as a National Marine Sanctuary in 2024, Canada's side remains vulnerable to escalating threats from habitat fragmentation, pollution, and climate change.

Eastern Lake Ontario's basin holds a critical portion of the Great Lakes freshwater supply and provides drinking water for millions. It is also a documented biodiversity hotspot, providing essential habitat for over 50 species at risk, including the Blanding's turtle, piping plover, and deepwater sculpin.

"Establishing an NMCA will secure federal resources to manage invasive species, protect critical shorelines, and aid Canada in reaching its international commitment to protect 30% of its land and water by 2030" said Julia Laforge, Policy and Campaign Manager for Protected Areas at Nature Canada.

Kenn Feigelman, founder of Deep/Quest 2 Expeditions emphasized the critical need for protecting the lake's cultural heritage:

"Our expeditions have shown us firsthand the incredible shipwrecks and delicate ecosystems hidden beneath Lake Ontario. Protecting these waters doesn't just save wildlife; it safeguards our shared maritime history."

The joint demand builds upon growing regional momentum, including recent municipal resolutions passed by Kingston and Brighton's city councils, alongside thousands of letters sent by Ontarians advocating for the lake's protection. The organizations stress that a coordinated effort between Parks Canada, the Ontario government, and close consultation with First Nations communities is the necessary next step to guarantee the long-term stewardship of the Great Lakes.

About Deep/Quest 2 Expeditions
Deep/Quest 2 Expeditions is an internationally-acclaimed, Canadian-led, aquatic exploration and research organization dedicated to underwater discovery, marine heritage documentation, and fostering sustainable stewardship of Canada's unique aquatic environments.

About Nature Canada
Nature Canada is one of Canada's oldest national nature conservation charities. For over 80 years, the organization has connected Americans and Canadians to nature, defended wildlife, and protected threatened habitats across the country.