Niagara River Corridor recognized as 40th Wetland of International Importance by the United States

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The United States of America has designated the United States side of the Niagara River Corridor, iconic for its world-renowned waterfalls, as its 40th Wetland of International Importance.

The Wetland (number 2402 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance) is a freshwater, flowing, permanent river, connecting two large freshwater lakes. It covers over 5247.7 hectares and hosts numerous significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats, including a riverine littoral zone in the upper Niagara River that is a unique ecosystem type in the Great Lakes. It provides fresh water for approximately one million people, and is used to power two hydroelectric power plants in the USA and Canada.

Rare and threatened ecological communities are present with at least 21 species such as the Blanding’s turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) and the lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*). Seven species are listed on the IUCN Red List, such as the black-capped petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*), with the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) protected federally in the USA and 45 species protected at the state level in New York. It is also incredibly important as an overwintering site for water birds. During this period, 92 species of birds overwinter in the site, including large congregations of at least 40 species of waterbirds (including gulls and waterfowl). The site was also designated a globally significant Important Bird Area (IBA) supporting at least 338 species of birds.

This wetland also provides diverse ecosystem services such as fresh water for approximately one million people. Eight million people visit the US side of Niagara Falls each year. It is the backdrop to hundreds of thousands of boaters, hikers, anglers, birdwatchers and swimmers. The river is a laboratory for research and education that informs the world and it serves as a model of successful conservation and restoration in the midst of large cities.