

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR ABIA STATE

EDITORIAL NOTE

Every year, flooding reshapes life across Nigeria — flooding farmlands, endangering agricultural yield, displacing communities, closing schools, and cutting off roads. The Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) has mapped what 2026 will look like, and the picture is clear: with the right preparation, communities can absorb what is coming without catastrophe. We know this because 2025 proved it. Early warning and organised community action reduced flood fatalities by 76% and displaced persons by 84% compared to 2024 (ref). The goal for 2026 is to go further.

The flood year follows a predictable rhythm, and that predictability is a gift. The early rains of April through June give communities a window to act — clearing drainage channels, reinforcing riverbanks, and registering households for alerts — before the peak season intensifies in July, August, and September. By the time October and November arrive, the heaviest rains may have eased, but water that fell months earlier in Adamawa and Cameroon is still travelling downstream toward the delta states. Communities in Anambra, Delta, Bayelsa, and Rivers need to stay vigilant well into November, long after they might assume the danger has passed.

The Communities That Need the Most Support:

Ten states face the sharpest risk in 2026: Kogi, Niger, Delta, Anambra, Benue, Kebbi, Rivers, Bayelsa, Adamawa, and Cross River but the threat is not abstract. Across Nigeria, 30,707 communities are at risk, along with 4,792 health facilities and 10,684 schools. When a health centre floods, patients lose access to care. When a school fills with water, children lose months of learning. These are the human costs that preparation can prevent.

In Kogi, where the Niger and Benue rivers meet at Lokoja, riverine flooding can isolate entire communities for weeks. Local governments there should be identifying high ground now,

designating safe assembly points, and making sure every community has a marked escape route. In Benue, the low-lying areas around Makurdi need the same attention before the Benue River crests. In Port Harcourt and other urban settings, where poor urban drainage compounds river and tidal flooding, the single most impactful community action is also the simplest — keeping drains clear of refuse.

With 4.2 million hectares of farmland at risk, agriculture sits at the centre of the 2026 challenge. Planting early-maturing crop varieties and using ridges or mounds instead of flat planting beds reduces both waterlogging damage and the risk of a total harvest loss. Staggered planting — sowing in batches rather than all at once means that if one batch is hit by flooding, others survive. Harvesting before October, and storing produce in elevated spaces away from floodwater, protects what has already been grown.

For northern farming communities, the challenge runs deeper, because the flood season is immediately followed by a severe dry period from December through February. The practical response is to treat flood season not only as a threat but as an opportunity — storing water in tanks, drums, and ponds during the wet months to carry livestock and households through the drought that follows.

The infrastructure of flood resilience is not complicated. It is community flood wardens who know which households have elderly or disabled residents and can reach them first. It is local radio stations broadcasting NIHSA alerts in local languages so that fishermen and farmers in remote areas receive warnings in time to act. It is traditional rulers and community leaders who have identified, in advance, which road out of the community stays passable longest. It is households that keep a small emergency kit — water purification tablets, key documents, basic medicine — packed and accessible before the rains arrive.

None of this requires waiting for government. Communities that prepare themselves reduce their own losses and make it easier for relief to reach those who need it most when flooding does occur.



Where local government is active and well-coordinated, the difference in outcomes is measurable.

The priorities for 2026 are straightforward: clear primary drainage channels before April, pre-position food and medical supplies in high-risk areas before July, and ensure that development permits are not issued for floodplain land. These are not expensive interventions. They are largely organisational — a matter of doing in advance what would otherwise be done in crisis.

Nigeria has 30,707 communities, 10,684 schools, and 4,792 health facilities in the path of the 2026 flood season. Each one is also a community that has survived flooding before, that has knowledge of its own landscape, and that can act. The science has been done. The warnings have been issued.

What happens next depends on what communities, local governments, and individuals choose to do with this information — starting now, while there is still time.



Abia State

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN ABIA IN 2026

Abia State will experience flooding in 2026. The flooding will come in three different periods. Some periods are worse than others.

The Three Flood Periods for Abia:

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rivers begin to rise. Low-lying areas near water start to see water. Flash floods can happen in towns with blocked drains.	Low to Medium
July, August, September (Peak rainy season)	This is the most dangerous time. Heavy rains fill up rivers. Water spills onto roads and into communities.	Medium to High

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
October, November (Late flooding)	Water from upstream areas slowly moves down. Even after rains reduce, flooding can continue. This catches many people off guard.	Medium to High

WHICH PARTS OF ABIA ARE AT RISK

Abia State falls within **Hydrological Area VII (Eastern Littoral)**. This means Abia shares river systems with Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi, Imo, and Rivers.

By the numbers (from NIHSA):

Risk Level	How Many Communities?	What This Means
High Flood Risk	1,190 communities (across AMJ, JAS, ON combined)	These communities will see serious flooding. People may need to leave their homes.
Medium Flood Risk	736 communities	These areas will see significant water. Farmlands and roads near rivers will be affected.
Low Flood Risk	1,073 communities	Localized flooding in some areas. Be aware and take precautions.

WHEN IS THE WORST TIME FOR ABIA?

The **JAS period (July, August, September)** is the most dangerous for Abia.

During JAS:

- Abia is listed among **High Flood Risk** states
- Rivers will swell beyond their banks
- Low-lying communities near waterways will see water enter homes and farms

The **ON period (October, November)** also remains risky. Do not assume the danger is over after September.

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN ABIA

Based on the national forecast for the Eastern Littoral zone (HA-VII):

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Rice (lowland)	JAS (July-September)	Plant with first rains in March-April. Prepare small walls to hold water, but also clear drainage so water does not destroy the farm.
Maize	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Maize does not like wet feet. Use early-maturing varieties (90-110 days).
Cassava	Year-round but worse in JAS	Plant on mounds or ridges. With above-normal rainfall in the south, ridges are essential to prevent waterlogging.
Vegetables (okra, pepper, tomatoes, leafy greens)	JAS and ON	Use raised beds in wet areas. During heavy rain, watch for fungal diseases. Improve air circulation between plants.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Yam	JAS	Plant on mounds in March-April. Plant in batches so if early rains cause problems, later plants survive.

WHAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN ABIA MUST DO

WHAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN ABIA MUST DO

For all livestock owners:

Action	When to Do It	Why
Vaccinate all animals	February-March (before rains start)	Wet ground spreads diseases faster
Deworm all animals	Start of rains, then again mid-season	Worms and parasites increase in wet conditions
Provide raised housing	Before April	Animals must have dry ground to stand on. Wet ground causes foot rot and pneumonia.
Prepare for heat	March-May (hot months)	Provide shade and plenty of water

For poultry farmers in Abia:

- Reduce the number of birds per cage. Do not overcrowd.
- Open the sides of your poultry house for ventilation.
- Feed birds early in the morning and late in the evening (cooler hours).
- Add vitamins and electrolytes to drinking water. This helps birds cope with heat.

- Never leave birds without water. Check twice every day.
- During heavy rains, make sure the roof does not leak. Wet birds get sick.

For goat and sheep farmers in Abia:

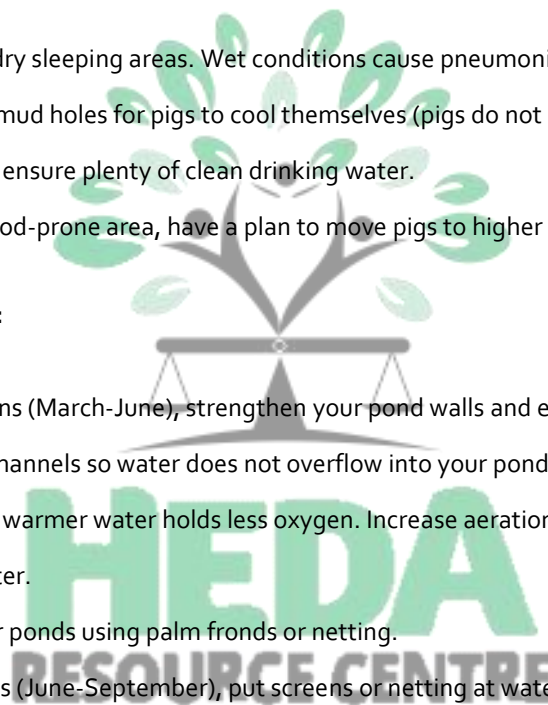
- Raised housing is essential. Do not let animals sleep on wet ground.
- Watch for foot rot. If an animal starts limping, treat immediately.
- Cut and store grasses in June and July. Use these during the August dry spell when grass may be scarce.

For pig farmers in Abia:

- Pigs must have dry sleeping areas. Wet conditions cause pneumonia.
- Provide shaded mud holes for pigs to cool themselves (pigs do not sweat).
- During hot May, ensure plenty of clean drinking water.
- If you are in a flood-prone area, have a plan to move pigs to higher ground.

For fish farmers in Abia:

- Before heavy rains (March-June), strengthen your pond walls and embankments.
- Clear drainage channels so water does not overflow into your pond.
- During hot May, warmer water holds less oxygen. Increase aeration by splashing water or adding fresh water.
- Place shade over ponds using palm fronds or netting.
- During peak rains (June-September), put screens or netting at water inlets to stop debris from entering.



WHAT TO DO IF FLOODING COMES

When NIHSA or NEMA sends a High Flood Risk warning:

1. **Leave immediately.** Do not wait to see the water.
2. Move to the designated safe place in your community (high ground).
3. **Do not try to walk through moving floodwater.** It can sweep you away.
4. If it is safe, switch off electricity at the mains before leaving.
5. Take your emergency kit, important documents, and any medicines you need.

6. Make sure all family members are accounted for — especially children and elderly people.
7. Report to your local government flood officer or community flood warden.

WHAT TO PREPARE BEFORE THE FLOODS COME

Every household in a flood-risk area should prepare:

- An emergency kit containing: water purification tablets, first aid supplies, copies of important documents (in a waterproof bag), and enough food for at least three days.
- Know your escape route. Where is the nearest high ground?
- Register with your local government flood officer to receive alerts by phone or radio.
- Raise important belongings (mattresses, electronics, food stores) above the expected flood level.
- Clear the drainage channels around your home before the rains begin.



WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN ABIA

Agency	What They Do	Contact
NIHSA	Issues flood warnings	0800-NIHSA-NG
NEMA	Disaster response and relief	0800-NEMA-NG
Abia State SEMA	State-level emergency response	Contact your LGA Agriculture Officer for local numbers
NiMet	Weather forecasts	www.nimet.gov.ng

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR ABIA

- **You will see flooding in 2026.** The highest threat are most likely in July, August, and September.

- **Above-normal rainfall is expected** in the Eastern Littoral zone. This means more water than usual.
- **Farmers:** Plant on ridges or mounds. Clear drainage channels. Watch for fungal diseases.
- **Livestock owners:** Raise housing off the ground. Vaccinate before rains. Deworm regularly.
- **Do not wait until water arrives.** Prepare your emergency kit and know your escape route now.

