

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR AKWA IBOM 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.

Source: Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) 2026 Annual Flood Outlook

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN AKWA IBOM IN 2026

Akwa Ibom State faces a special kind of flooding. You have both **river flooding** (from rivers overflowing their banks) and **coastal flooding** (from the Atlantic Ocean pushing water inland). This makes your situation different from states in the north.

The 2026 PRESAGG regional forecast (from AGRHYMET) says that **coastal river basins in southern Nigeria will experience above-normal flows**. This means more water than usual will flow through your rivers and creeks.

The Three Flood Periods for Akwa Ibom:

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
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When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rains intensify. Low-lying areas near waterways start to flood. 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. Coastal surges push water inland. Water spills onto roads and into communities.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding)	Recession flooding continues. Water from upstream areas slowly moves through the delta. Do not assume the danger is over after September.	Medium to High



WHICH PARTS OF AKWA IBOM ARE AT RISK

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

Important note from NIHSA: In the AMJ period (April-May-June), Akwa Ibom is not listed among states with High Flood Risk. However, in the JAS and ON periods, the state moves into Medium and Low risk categories for many communities.

By the numbers (from NIHSA across all seasons):

Risk Level	What This Means for Akwa Ibom
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Risk Level	What This Means for Akwa Ibom
High Flood Risk	Some communities, especially near rivers and the coast, will see serious flooding. People may need to leave their homes.
Medium Flood Risk	Many communities will see significant water. Farmlands and roads near rivers and creeks will be affected. This is where most of Akwa Ibom's flood exposure falls.
Low Flood Risk	Some localized flooding in certain areas. Be aware and take precautions.

For the JAS period (July-August-September) in HA-VII:

- 1,433 communities at High Flood Risk across the zone (includes parts of Akwa Ibom, Abia, Benue, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Rivers)
- 1,566 communities at Medium Flood Risk

For roads: Akwa Ibom has **15 road sections** identified as at risk of flooding in 2026 (Table 4.26 of the AFO).

WHEN IS THE WORST TIME FOR AKWA IBOM?

The **JAS period (July, August, September)** is the most dangerous for Akwa Ibom. This is when:

- Heavy monsoon rains fill up rivers and creeks
- Coastal storm surges push ocean water inland
- Poor drainage in urban areas (like Uyo) causes flash flooding

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

ABOVE-NORMAL RAINFALL WARNING FOR AKWA IBOM

The PRESAGG 2026 forecast (from AGRHYMET, cited in the AFO) predicts **above-normal river flows** for coastal basins in southern Nigeria.

What this means for Akwa Ibom:

- You will likely receive **more water than usual** during the 2026 rainy season
- Rivers and creeks will carry higher volumes of water
- Low-lying coastal communities face higher risk of inundation
- The growing season will be wetter than normal

This is good for some crops (like rice and vegetables that need water) **but dangerous for others** (like cassava and maize that do not like wet feet).

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN AKWA IBOM

Based on the national forecast for the Eastern Littoral zone (HA-VII) and the above-normal rainfall prediction:

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
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Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Rice (lowland)	JAS (July-September) and ON (October-November)	Plant with first rains in March-April. Prepare small walls to hold water in your fields. But also clear drainage channels so water does not destroy your farm. With above-normal rainfall, you need to manage water, not just hold it.
Cassava	Year-round but worse in JAS	Plant on mounds or ridges. Cassava does not like wet feet. With above-normal rainfall, ridges are essential to prevent waterlogging. Choose early to medium-maturing varieties (8-12 months).
Maize	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Maize does not like wet feet. Use early to medium-maturing varieties (90-110 days). Plant in batches so if one batch floods, others survive.
Vegetables (okra, pepper, tomatoes, leafy greens, garden eggs)	JAS and ON	Use raised beds in wet areas. During heavy rain, watch for fungal diseases. Improve air circulation between plants. Water twice daily during hot May if needed.
Yam	JAS	Plant on mounds in March-April. Plant in batches. The moderate dry spell in March-May could affect emergence.
Cocoyam	JAS and ON	This crop does well in wet conditions but still needs good drainage. Plant on mounds.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Plantain and Banana	Year-round	These crops can tolerate wet conditions but do not like standing water. Ensure good drainage around the base of each plant.

WHAT LIVESTOCK AND FISH FARMERS IN AKWA IBOM 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 Akwa Ibom:

- 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.
- Watch for **coccidiosis** — wet litter increases this disease. Keep litter dry.

For goat and sheep farmers in Akwa Ibom:

- 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.
- During hot May, provide shade and plenty of water.

For pig farmers in Akwa Ibom:

- 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.
- In high-rainfall areas, ensure drainage carries manure away from living areas.
- If you are in a flood-prone area (near rivers or creeks), have a plan to move pigs to higher ground.

For fish farmers in Akwa Ibom (very important for this state):

Akwa Ibom has many fish farmers, especially in riverine and coastal areas.

Action	When to Do It	Why
Strengthen pond walls and embankments	Before heavy rains (March-June)	Heavy rains and above-normal flows can wash away weak walls

Action	When to Do It	Why
Clear drainage channels	Before April	Prevent overflow into your ponds
Install screens or netting at water inlets	Before April	Stop debris from entering during floods
Increase aeration	During hot May	Warmer water holds less oxygen. Splash water or add fresh water.
Provide shade over ponds	March-May	Use palm fronds or netting to cool the water
Monitor water quality	Throughout rainy season	Sudden changes can stress or kill fish
Prepare for dry season	October-November	Water levels may drop. Consider partial harvest if ponds get too low.

For fish farmers in flood-prone areas (near rivers, creeks, or the coast):

- **Be very careful.** Your ponds can overflow or wash away completely.
- Strengthen embankments more than you think you need.
- Have harvest nets ready in case of emergency.
- Consider cage culture in protected water bodies as an alternative to ponds.

COASTAL FLOODING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Akwa Ibom's coastline makes you vulnerable to **storm surges** — when the ocean pushes water inland.

Signs that a coastal flood may be coming:

- The wind blows strongly from the ocean toward the land for many hours
- The water level in creeks and rivers rises even when there has been no rain
- Local authorities issue a warning

What to do if you live near the coast:

- Know the highest ground in your area. This is where you will go.
- Do not wait for official warnings if you see the ocean water rising unusually high.
- Move your belongings to higher levels in your home.
- If you have a boat, secure it or move it to a safe place.

URBAN FLOODING IN UYO AND OTHER TOWNS

Akwa Ibom's cities and towns face **urban flooding** when heavy rain falls on blocked drainage channels.

What causes urban flooding in Akwa Ibom:

- Drainage channels blocked with plastic, sand, and garbage
- Buildings constructed in areas where water naturally flows
- Roads that do not have proper drainage

What you can do in your town or city:

- Do not throw garbage into drains. This is the number one cause of urban flooding.
- Clear the drainage channel in front of your home before the rains begin.
- If you see a blocked drain that needs government help, report it to your local government.

- If your home is in a low-lying area, prepare sandbags to divert water away from your door.
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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.

If you are in a coastal area: Pay attention to wind and ocean conditions, not just rain. Storm surges can come even when it is not raining.

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.

For farmers: Store harvested crops in elevated storage. Do not keep bags of grain on the floor where floodwater can reach them.

For fish farmers: Have a plan to move fish or harvest early if flooding threatens your ponds.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR AKWA IBOM

Unlike northern states, Akwa Ibom does not face severe drought during the dry season.

Dry season outlook (October 2026 - March 2027):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
South-South (including Akwa Ibom)	Slightly Wet to Moderately Wet	You will have water throughout the dry season. No drought vulnerability.

This means you do not need to worry about rivers stopping or severe water scarcity like farmers in the north.

However, the dry season forecast says **Slightly Wet to Moderately Wet** — this means you will still have water, but it will be less than the rainy season. Plan accordingly.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN AKWA IBOM

Agency	What They Do	Contact
NIHSA	Issues flood warnings	0800-NIHSA-NG
NEMA	Disaster response and relief	0800-NEMA-NG
Akwa Ibom 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 AKWA IBOM

- **You will see flooding in 2026.** The worst months are July, August, and September.
- **Above-normal river flows are predicted** for coastal basins. This means more water than usual in your rivers and creeks.
- **You have two types of flooding:** River flooding and coastal storm surge. Pay attention to both.
- **Urban flooding is a problem in towns and cities** — keep drains clear. Do not throw garbage into drainage channels.
- **Farmers:** Plant on ridges or mounds. Clear drainage channels. Watch for fungal diseases with above-normal rainfall.
- **Fish farmers:** Strengthen pond walls before heavy rains. Clear drainage channels. Provide shade during hot May.
- **The good news:** You do not face severe drought like northern states. Your dry season will have Slightly Wet to Moderately Wet conditions.

- **Do not wait until water arrives.** Prepare your emergency kit and know your escape route now.

This information comes directly from the NIHSA 2026 Annual Flood Outlook.

PREPARE NOW. DO NOT WAIT.

