

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR ANAMBRA 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 ANAMBRA IN 2026

Anambra State is one of the most flood-vulnerable states in all of Nigeria. The government has listed Anambra among the **Top 10 States at High Risk** for flooding in 2026.

Why is Anambra so vulnerable? Two big reasons:

First, the River Niger flows through Anambra. The river enters Anambra from Delta State and passes through major towns and cities, including Onitsha. When the Niger swells with water from the north, Anambra feels the full force.

Second, the ON period (October-November) is especially dangerous for Anambra. Water from upstream areas (from as far away as Adamawa and Cameroon) slowly moves down the Niger and Benue rivers. This water arrives in

Anambra in October and November — long after the rains have stopped in many places. This is called **recession flooding**, and it catches many people off guard because they think the danger is over after September.

The Three Flood Periods for Anambra:

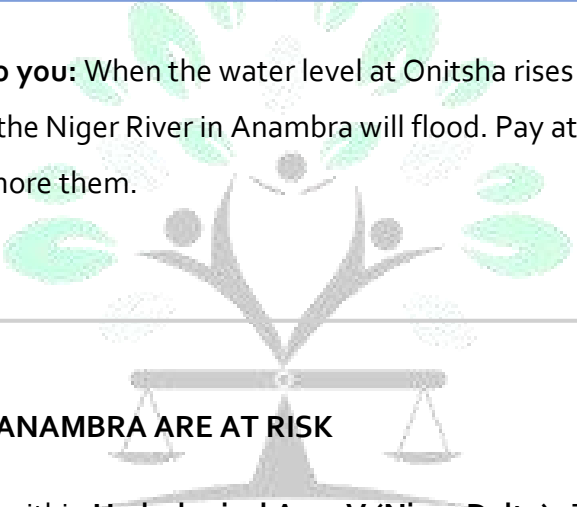
When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rivers begin to rise. Low-lying areas near the Niger River start to see water. Flash floods can happen in towns with blocked drains.	Low to Medium
July, August, September (Peak rainy season)	This is very dangerous. Heavy rains fill up the Niger River. Water spills onto roads and into communities along the river.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding - VERY DANGEROUS FOR ANAMBRA)	This period is critical. Recession flooding from the upper Niger and Benue basins arrives in Anambra. The delayed flood pulse in October-November catches many communities off guard.	Medium to High

THE ONSHTSHA GAUGE STATION: YOUR EARLY WARNING

NIHSA has a monitoring station at **Onitsha** on the River Niger. This is one of the most important flood warning stations in Nigeria.

What Was Recorded in 2025	What Is Expected in 2026
Peak discharge: 11,200 cubic metres per second	Projected peak: 10,400 to 13,800 cubic metres per second
Risk level: High Flood Risk	Risk level: High Flood Risk

Why this matters to you: When the water level at Onitsha rises above normal, communities along the Niger River in Anambra will flood. Pay attention to NIHSA warnings. Do not ignore them.



WHICH PARTS OF ANAMBRA ARE AT RISK

Anambra State falls within **Hydrological Area V (Niger Delta)** . This means Anambra is in the same flood zone as Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, and parts of Edo, Enugu, Imo, and Kogi.

By the numbers (from NIHSA for HA-V):

Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-V which includes Anambra)	What This Means for Anambra
AMJ (April-May-June)	High	531 communities	Early flooding begins along the Niger. Low-lying areas see water.

Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-V which includes Anambra)	What This Means for Anambra
JAS (July-August-September)	High	863 communities	This is peak flooding. Widespread inundation along the Niger River corridor.
ON (October-November)	High	587 communities	Recession flooding arrives. Communities that thought the danger was over get flooded.

Annual total for Anambra: Anambra is among the **Top 10 High Risk States** in Nigeria. Many communities across the state will see flooding in 2026, especially those along the River Niger.

For roads: Anambra has **52 road sections** identified as at risk of flooding in 2026 (Table 4.26 of the AFO).



THE URBAN FLOOD HOTSPOT: ONSHTSHA

The AFO lists Anambra as one of Nigeria's **Urban Flood Hotspots** for 2026.

Rank	State	Specific Location	Main Flood Cause	Risk Level
8 (tied)	Delta /	River Niger overbank flow;	River Niger overflows its	High

Rank	State	Specific Location	Main Flood Cause	Risk Level
	Anambra	ferry and bridge disruption	banks; ferries and bridges are disrupted	

What this means for Onitsha and surrounding areas:

- The River Niger will overflow its banks during peak flooding (JAS and ON periods)
- Ferries that cross the river may be disrupted or stop running
- Bridges may become dangerous or impassable
- Communities along the riverbank will see water enter homes and businesses

If you live in Onitsha or any town along the Niger River, you must take flooding seriously in 2026.

WHEN IS THE WORST TIME FOR ANAMBRA?

The **JAS period (July, August, September)** is very dangerous. But the **ON period (October, November)** is equally dangerous — and maybe more dangerous because people do not expect it.

The 2025 peak at Onitsha was 11,200 m³/s. In 2026, the projected peak is 10,400 to 13,800 m³/s — similar to 2025 or higher.

The peak will arrive between September and October. This is when the Niger River will be at its highest.

But here is the critical warning for Anambra: Even after the peak passes, water levels will remain high for many weeks. The October-November period is when recession flooding hits the delta zone. Do not assume that because September has passed, you are safe.

THE SPECIAL WARNING FOR ANAMBRA: DON'T BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD IN OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

The AFO says this clearly:

"The delayed flood pulse in October-November can catch delta communities off guard after the perceived peak of the JAS period."

What this means in simple words:

Many people think flooding only happens when the rains are heavy. In Anambra, flooding can happen in October and November even when the rains have reduced. This is because water that fell in Adamawa, Taraba, Benue, and Kogi months ago is slowly moving down the river and finally arriving in Anambra.

Do not put away your emergency kit in October. Stay alert until November ends.

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN ANAMBRA

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. Late-season rice is at extreme risk in ON period. Consider planting early-maturing varieties

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
		that can be harvested before October.
Cassava	Year-round but worse in JAS and ON	Plant on mounds or ridges. Cassava does not like wet feet. With above-normal rainfall in the south, ridges are essential. 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. Second season maize (planted after the August dry spell) is at risk in ON period — harvest early.
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. In flood-prone areas near the Niger, consider moving vegetable gardens away from the riverbank.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Yam	JAS	Plant on mounds in March-April. Plant in batches. Harvest before October if possible.
Cocoyam	JAS and ON	This crop does well in wet conditions but still needs good drainage. Plant on mounds.
Maize (second season)	ON (October-November)	Second season maize planted in August-September will be in the field during October-November flooding. This is high risk. Plant early-maturing varieties that can be harvested by late September.

WHAT LIVESTOCK AND FISH FARMERS IN ANAMBRA 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

Action	When to Do It	Why
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
Have an evacuation plan for animals	Before flood season	Where will you take your animals when water rises?

For poultry farmers in Anambra:

- 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 and flooding, ensure housing is leak-proof and raised off the ground.
- Watch for **coccidiosis** — wet litter increases this disease. Keep litter dry.

For goat and sheep farmers in Anambra:

- 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.

- If you live near the Niger River, have a plan to move animals to higher ground during JAS and ON flooding.

For pig farmers in Anambra:

- 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 flood-prone areas, have a plan to move pigs to higher ground.
- **Critical warning for Anambra pig farmers near the Niger:** The ON period flood (October-November) can rise quickly. Do not wait. Move pigs early.

For fish farmers in Anambra:

Anambra has many fish farmers, especially in riverine areas near the Niger.

Action	When to Do It	Why
Strengthen pond walls and embankments	Before heavy rains (March-June)	Floodwaters can wash away weak walls
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
Have harvest nets ready	Before JAS period	If flooding threatens, you may need to harvest quickly
Monitor water levels	Continuously during JAS and ON	Be ready to act when water rises

Action	When to Do It	Why
Consider moving fish to cages in protected areas	Before flood season	Cages may be safer than ponds during floods

Special warning for fish farmers near the Niger River: The ON period flood (October-November) is a serious danger. Your ponds can overflow or wash away. Have an emergency harvest plan.

THE FERRY AND BRIDGE DISRUPTION WARNING

The AFO specifically warns that Anambra will face **ferry and bridge disruption** during flooding.

What this means:

- Ferries that cross the Niger River may stop operating
- Bridges may become too dangerous to use
- You may not be able to cross from one side of the river to the other

What you should do:

- If you need to cross the river for work, market, or to visit family, plan your trips before the flood peak (before September)
 - Stock up on essential supplies before the peak flood period
 - If you are a trader who relies on crossing the river, make alternative arrangements for October-November
 - Listen to NIHSA and NEMA warnings about road and bridge closures
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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.
8. **Do not assume that because September has passed, you are safe.** Stay alert through November.

WHAT TO PREPARE BEFORE THE FLOODS COME

Every household in a flood-risk area (especially along the Niger River) 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? If you live near the Niger, identify two different escape routes in case one is flooded.
- 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.
- If you have a boat or canoe, keep it ready for emergency use.

For farmers near the Niger River:

- Store harvested crops in elevated storage. Do not keep bags of grain on the floor.

- Consider moving stored crops away from the riverbank entirely if possible.
- Have a plan to move livestock to higher ground quickly.

For market traders in Onitsha and other river towns:

- Know where you will move your goods if flooding comes.
- Have a relationship with someone on higher ground who can store your goods temporarily.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR ANAMBRA

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

Dry season outlook (October 2026 - March 2027):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
South-East (including Anambra)	Normal to Slightly 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, note that the ON period (October-November) is still part of the dry season outlook. This means during the early dry season, conditions will be Normal to Slightly Wet — enough water to sustain crops and livestock, but also enough water to cause flooding from recession flows.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN ANAMBRA

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

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR ANAMBRA

- **You are one of the Top 10 most flood-vulnerable states in Nigeria.** Take this seriously.
- **The worst months are July, August, and September.** But October and November are also very dangerous.
- **The ON period (October-November) is a special danger for Anambra.** Recession flooding catches many people off guard. Do not assume the danger is over after September.
- **Onitsha is an Urban Flood Hotspot.** The Niger River will overflow its banks. Ferries and bridges may be disrupted.
- **52 road sections in Anambra are at risk of flooding.** Plan alternative routes.

- **Farmers:** Plant on ridges or mounds. Clear drainage channels. Harvest late-season crops before October if possible.
- **Fish farmers near the Niger:** Strengthen pond walls. Have an emergency harvest plan for October-November.
- **The good news:** You do not face severe drought like northern states. Your dry season will have Normal to Slightly Wet conditions.
- **Do not wait until water arrives.** Prepare your emergency kit, know your escape route, and stay alert through November.

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

PREPARE NOW. DO NOT WAIT.

