

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR EBONYI 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 EBONYI IN 2026

Ebonyi State faces serious flooding in 2026, especially in its low-lying areas and rice-growing regions. The state is part of the **Eastern Littoral** hydrological zone, which means it shares river systems with Abia, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Imo, and Rivers.

Why is Ebonyi vulnerable to flooding? Three big reasons:

First, Ebonyi has extensive lowland rice fields. These areas are naturally wet and lie close to rivers and floodplains. When heavy rains come, water rises quickly in these low areas.

Second, Ebonyi receives high rainfall. The AFO forecasts **Normal to Slightly Wet** conditions for the South-East zone during the wet season. In some parts of the state, rainfall will be above normal.

Third, Ebonyi has rivers that flow into the Cross River system. Water from Ebonyi drains into the Cross River, which means when there is heavy rain upstream, water levels can rise throughout the state's river systems.

The Three Flood Periods for Ebonyi:

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rains intensify. Low-lying rice fields begin to hold water. Rivers start to rise.	Low to Medium
July, August, September (Peak rainy season)	This is the most dangerous time. Heavy rains fill up rivers and floodplains. Rice fields become fully inundated.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding)	Flooding continues. Water from upstream areas slowly moves down. Late-season crops are at risk.	Medium to High



WHICH PARTS OF EBONYI ARE AT RISK

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

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

Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-VII which includes Ebonyi)	What This Means for Ebonyi
AMJ (April-May-June)	High	1,190 communities	Early flooding begins. Low-lying rice fields and areas near rivers see water.
JAS (July-August-September)	High	1,433 communities	This is peak flooding. Widespread inundation across low-lying areas of the state.
ON (October-November)	High	1,216 communities	Late flooding continues. Rice and other late-season crops still in the field are at risk.

Important note from the AFO: In the AMJ period, Ebonyi is listed among states with High Flood Risk. In the JAS period, Ebonyi remains in High Flood Risk. In the ON period, Ebonyi continues to have High Flood Risk.

Annual total for Ebonyi: Ebonyi is among the states with High Flood Risk across all three seasons. Thousands of communities across the state will see flooding in 2026.

For roads: Ebonyi has **22 road sections** identified as at risk of flooding in 2026 (Table 4.26 of the AFO).

THE LOWLAND RICE AREAS: YOUR MAIN FLOOD DANGER

Ebonyi is famous for its rice production. The state's lowland rice fields are some of the most extensive in Nigeria. But these same fields are also the most flood-prone areas in the state.

What the AFO says about Ebonyi's flood risk:

While the AFO does not name Ebonyi's specific LGAs in the main text (detailed community lists are in Appendix A), the NiMet guide (which you shared earlier) identifies Afikpo North, Afikpo South, Ikwo, Abakaliki, Izzi, Ohaukwu, Ezza North, and Ezza South as areas that should be **extra vigilant** for flooding, especially in rice-growing regions.

Based on the AFO's risk classification for HA-VII, here is what you should know:

Area Type	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Lowland rice fields (Ikwo, Abakaliki, Ezza, Izzi, Ohaukwu)	JAS (July-September) and ON (October-November)	Rice can tolerate standing water, but too much will drown it. Clear drainage channels so water can flow through, not just sit. Plant early-maturing varieties.
Areas near Cross River tributaries (Afikpo North, Afikpo South)	JAS and ON	The Cross River and its tributaries will carry more water than usual. Low-lying communities near these rivers are at high risk.
Urban areas (Abakaliki)	JAS	Urban flooding from blocked drainage channels. Keep drains clear. Do not throw garbage into drains.

RESOURCE CENTRE

WHEN IS THE WORST TIME FOR EBONYI?

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

- Heavy monsoon rains fall across the state
- Lowland rice fields become fully inundated
- Rivers and tributaries overflow their banks
- Urban areas like Abakaliki may experience flash floods from blocked drains

The **ON period (October, November)** also remains risky, especially for rice farmers. Late-season rice that is still in the field in October and November can be destroyed by recession flooding.

ABOVE-NORMAL RAINFALL WARNING FOR EBONYI

The PRESAGG 2026 forecast (from AGRHYMET, cited in the AFO) predicts **above-normal river flows** for coastal basins in southern Nigeria. While Ebonyi is not directly on the coast, it drains into the Cross River system, which is part of the coastal basin network.

What this means for Ebonyi:

- The rivers and tributaries that flow through Ebonyi will carry **more water than usual** in 2026
- Low-lying rice fields will be wetter than normal
- The growing season will be wetter than normal
- This is good for rice (which needs water) but dangerous if water levels rise too high

This is not a normal year. Prepare for more water than usual.

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN EBONYI

Ebonyi is a major agricultural state, with rice as the dominant crop. Here is how different crops will be affected.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do

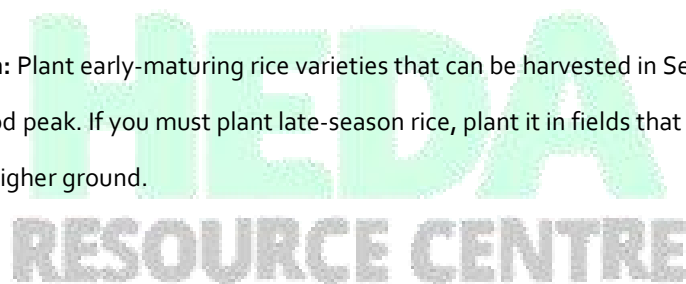
Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Rice (lowland - the main crop)	JAS (July-September) and ON (October-November)	Rice can handle water, but too much will drown it. Plant with first rains in March-April. Prepare small walls to hold water in your fields (this is good for rice). But also clear drainage channels so water does not sit too deep. Plant early-maturing varieties that can be harvested before the ON period (October-November).
Rice (upland)	JAS (July-September)	Upland rice does not like wet feet. If you grow upland rice, plant on ridges. Above-normal rainfall may make upland rice farming risky this year. Consider switching to lowland varieties if you have lowland fields.
Cassava	Year-round but worse in JAS and ON	Plant on mounds or ridges. Cassava does not like wet feet. With above-normal rainfall, 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 is at high risk in ON period.
Yam	JAS (July-September)	Plant on mounds in March-April. Plant in batches. Harvest before October if possible.
Vegetables (okra, pepper, tomatoes,	JAS and ON	Use raised beds. During heavy rain, watch for fungal diseases. Improve air circulation between plants.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
leafy greens)		
Cowpea	JAS (July-September)	Plant early. Harvest before peak flood in September-October.
Groundnuts	ON (October-November)	Groundnuts are at risk during late flooding. Harvest early or plant in areas away from floodplains.

Special note for Ebonyi rice farmers:

The AFO warns that the ON period (October-November) is when late-season crops are still in the field. For Ebonyi, this means rice. If you plant rice that matures in October or November, you risk losing it to flooding.

Recommendation: Plant early-maturing rice varieties that can be harvested in September, before the ON period flood peak. If you must plant late-season rice, plant it in fields that have good drainage or are on slightly higher ground.



WHAT LIVESTOCK AND FISH FARMERS IN EBONYI MUST DO

For all livestock owners:

Action	When to Do It	Why
--------	---------------	-----

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
Have an evacuation plan for animals	Before flood season	Where will you take your animals when water rises?

For poultry farmers in Ebonyi:

- 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.
- Never leave birds without water. Check twice every day.
- During heavy rains, 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 Ebonyi:

- 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 heavy rains and flooding, move animals to higher ground.

For pig farmers in Ebonyi:

- 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 (lowland rice zones), have a plan to move pigs to higher ground.

For fish farmers in Ebonyi:

Fish farming is growing in Ebonyi, especially in areas with access to water.

Action	When to Do It	Why
Strengthen pond walls and embankments	Before heavy rains (March-June)	Floodwaters can wash away weak walls. Your fish will escape.
Clear drainage channels	Before April	Prevent overflow into your ponds from surrounding water
Install screens or netting at water inlets	Before April	Stop debris from entering and stop fish from escaping
Raise pond walls higher than normal	Before flood season	With above-normal rainfall, water levels will be higher than usual
Have harvest nets ready	Before JAS period	If flooding threatens, you may need to harvest quickly

Action	When to Do It	Why
Monitor water quality	Throughout rainy season	Inflow from floods can change water temperature and oxygen levels suddenly

THE AUGUST DRY SPELL (LITTLE DRY SEASON)

The NiMet guide (which you shared earlier) indicates that the dry spell prediction (August Break) is **not applicable** for Ebonyi. This means you may not experience a significant reduction in rainfall around August.

What this means for Ebonyi farmers:

- You may not get a break from the rain in August
- This means continuous wet conditions throughout the rainy season
- For rice, this is generally good (rice needs water)
- For other crops (cassava, maize, vegetables), continuous rain increases the risk of fungal diseases and waterlogging
- Monitor your fields carefully. If you see standing water for more than a few days, dig drainage channels to let water escape.

URBAN FLOODING IN ABAKALIKI AND OTHER TOWNS

Ebonyi's towns and cities, especially Abakaliki, face urban flooding when heavy rain falls on blocked drainage channels.

What causes urban flooding in Ebonyi:

- 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.

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. **For livestock:** Move animals to higher ground before the water arrives. Do not wait.

WHAT TO PREPARE BEFORE THE FLOODS COME

Every household in a flood-risk area (especially in lowland rice zones) 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? In Ebonyi's lowland areas, high ground may be a road embankment or a hill.
- 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 rice farmers: Store harvested rice in elevated storage. Do not keep bags of rice on the floor where floodwater can reach them. If possible, store rice in a different community if yours is very low-lying.

For other farmers: Store harvested crops in elevated storage. Consider building raised platforms for grain storage.

For livestock owners: Identify high ground where you can move animals during flooding. Have a plan to move them quickly.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR EBONYI

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

Dry season outlook (October 2026 - March 2027):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
South-East (including Ebonyi)	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.

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 cause flooding from recession flows.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN EBONYI

Agency	What They Do	Contact
NIHSA	Issues flood warnings	0800-NIHSA-NG
NEMA	Disaster response and relief	0800-NEMA-NG
Ebonyi 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 EBONYI

- **You will see flooding in 2026.** The worst months are July, August, and September. But October and November also bring risk, especially for rice.
- **Ebonyi is among states with High Flood Risk** in all three seasons (AMJ, JAS, and ON). Take this seriously.
- **Lowland rice fields are the most vulnerable areas.** If you farm rice in Ikwo, Abakaliki, Ezza, Izzi, or Ohaukwu, prepare for more water than usual.
- **Afikpo North and Afikpo South** (near the Cross River) are also at high risk. Low-lying communities along the Cross River tributaries should be extra vigilant.
- **22 road sections in Ebonyi are at risk of flooding.** Plan alternative routes if you need to travel during rainy season.

- **Above-normal river flows are predicted** for the coastal basin network that Ebonyi drains into. This means more water than usual.
- **Rice farmers:** Plant early-maturing varieties. Clear drainage channels. Harvest before October if possible.
- **Other farmers:** Plant on mounds or ridges. Watch for fungal diseases. Ensure good drainage.
- **Urban residents:** Keep drains clear. Do not throw garbage into drainage channels.
- **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.

