

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR KWARA 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 KWARA IN 2026

Kwara State faces serious flooding in 2026, especially in its low-lying areas and communities along the Niger River. The state is part of the Niger Central hydrological zone, which means water that falls in Kwara flows into the Niger River system.

Why is Kwara vulnerable to flooding? Three main reasons:

First, the River Niger flows through Kwara. The river enters Kwara from Niger State and passes through communities like Jebba before continuing to Kogi. When the Niger swells with water from upstream (Kebbi, Niger, and even countries like Mali and Niger), Kwara feels the force.

Second, Kwara has other rivers and streams. The state also has the Awun River, Oyun River, and other waterways. When heavy rains fall, these rivers swell and overflow.

Third, Kwara has a compound risk problem. The AFO notes a **worsening drought trend** in the Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor over the past decade. This means you must prepare for both flooding and drying trends.

The Three Flood Periods for Kwara:

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.	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.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding)	Flooding continues. Recession flooding from upstream areas affects the state.	Medium to High



THE JEBBA GAUGE STATION: YOUR EARLY WARNING

NIHSA has a monitoring station at **Jebba** on the River Niger. This is an important flood warning station for Kwara State.

What Was Recorded in 2025

Peak discharge: 6,800 cubic metres per second

What Is Expected in 2026

Projected peak: 6,200 to 8,100 cubic metres per second

What Was Recorded in 2025

What Is Expected in 2026

Risk level: High Flood Risk

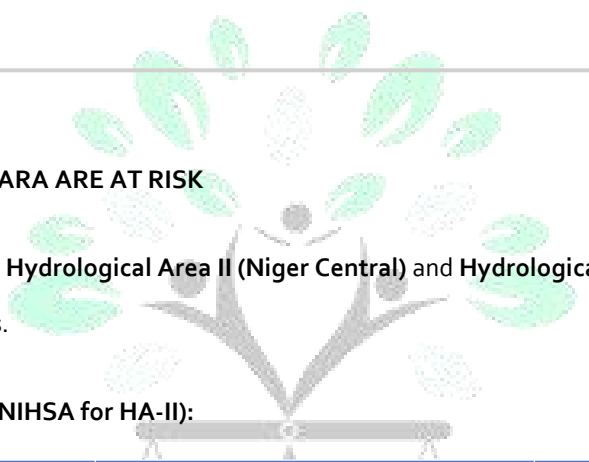
Risk level: High Flood Risk

Why this matters to you: When the water level at Jebba rises above normal, communities along the Niger River in Kwara will flood. Pay attention to NIHSA warnings.

WHICH PARTS OF KWARA ARE AT RISK

Kwara State falls within **Hydrological Area II (Niger Central)** and **Hydrological Area VI (Western Littoral)** for some areas.

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



Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-II which includes Kwara)	What This Means for Kwara
AMJ (April-May-June)	High	1,147 communities (for FCT, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Niger combined)	Early flooding begins. Low-lying areas near the Niger River see water.
JAS (July-August-September)	High	1,832 communities (for FCT, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Plateau, Zamfara combined)	This is peak flooding. Widespread inundation along the Niger River corridor.
ON (October-November)	High	1,405 communities (for FCT, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Plateau, Zamfara combined)	Late flooding continues. Recession flooding affects the state.

From the AFO's HA-VI tables (Western Littoral, for parts of Kwara):

Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-VI which includes parts of Kwara)
AMJ	High	849 communities
JAS	High	1,195 communities
ON	High	1,024 communities

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

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

THE NIGER RIVER: YOUR MAIN FLOOD DANGER

The Niger River is the dominant waterway in Kwara. It flows through the state, passing through communities like Jebba and Patigi.

What you should know about the Niger River in Kwara:

- It is fed by rainfall from a wide area, including upstream in Kebbi, Niger, and even countries like Mali and Niger
- When upstream areas get heavy rain, the river can rise quickly
- Low-lying communities along the river are at highest risk
- The Jebba Dam (hydroelectric) is located in Kwara — dam operations can affect water levels downstream

What to do if you live near the Niger River:

- Know the nearest high ground. Where will you go if the river rises?
- Pay attention to NIHSA warnings, especially readings from the Jebba gauge station
- Clear the drainage channels in your neighborhood
- If you see the river rising unusually high, do not wait for an official warning. Move to higher ground.

THE WORSENING DROUGHT TREND (COMPOUND RISK)

The AFO identifies a worrying trend for the Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor:

"The Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor shows a clear drying trend during the dry season, pointing to declining groundwater recharge over the decade."

What this means for Kwara:

- Even though you face flooding in the rainy season, the long-term trend is drying
- Groundwater levels (wells and boreholes) are declining over time
- The dry season is getting drier
- You must plan for both too much water (floods) and too little water (drying trends)

Period	What Will Happen	What This Means for You
Wet Season (April-September)	Slightly Dry to Normal	You will have near-normal rainfall.
Flood Season (JAS-ON)	High flood risk	The Niger River will overflow. Low-lying areas will flood.

Period	What Will Happen	What This Means for You
Dry Season (October-March)	Moderately Dry to Slightly Dry (with a drying trend)	The dry season is getting drier over time. Groundwater is declining.

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN KWARA

Kwara is a major agricultural state, known for rice, yam, cassava, maize, sorghum, and vegetables. Here is how different crops will be affected.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Rice (lowland/fadama)	JAS (July-September) and ON (October-November)	Rice is grown along the Niger River floodplain. Plant early-maturing varieties in March-April. Prepare small walls (bunds) to control water. Clear drainage channels. The ON period flood is dangerous — harvest before October if possible.
Yam	JAS (July-September)	Plant on mounds in March-April. Plant in batches. Harvest before October if possible.
Cassava	JAS and ON	Plant on mounds or ridges. Cassava does not like wet feet. Choose early to medium-maturing varieties (8-12 months).

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Maize	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Use early to medium-maturing varieties (90-110 days). Plant in batches. Second season maize is at risk in ON period.
Sorghum	JAS and ON	Plant early-maturing varieties. Harvest before October if possible.
Soybean	JAS (July-September)	Soybean does not like wet feet. Plant on ridges. Choose early-maturing varieties.
Cowpea	JAS (July-September)	Plant early. Harvest before peak flood.
Groundnuts	ON (October-November)	Groundnuts are at risk during late flooding. Harvest early.
Vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, okra)	JAS and ON	Use raised beds. Watch for fungal diseases.
Cashew	Year-round	Cashew trees do not like standing water. Ensure good drainage in cashew orchards.

Special note for Kwara farmers near the Niger River:

The Niger River floodplain is fertile but dangerous. If you farm in Jebba, Patigi, or other riverine areas:

- Plant early-maturing varieties that can be harvested before October
- Build small walls (bunds) around your fields to control water

- Also dig drainage channels so water does not get too deep
- Store harvested crops on high ground, away from the river
- Consider planting some fields further from the river as a backup

WHAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN KWARA 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.
Have an evacuation plan for animals	Before flood season	Where will you take your animals when water rises?
Prepare for drying trend	Long-term	Groundwater is declining. Plan for water conservation.

For cattle herders in Kwara:

- The Niger River floodplain is grazing land, but it is also flood-prone

- During JAS and especially ON (October-November), move cattle away from the river floodplain
- Identify higher ground grazing areas before the flood season
- Store hay and fodder from June-September for use during and after flooding
- The long-term drying trend means you should identify reliable water sources for the future

For goat and sheep farmers in Kwara:

- Raised housing is essential during flood season
- Watch for foot rot. If an animal starts limping, treat immediately.
- Cut and store grasses in June, July, and August. Use these during flood season and dry season.
- Prepare for the drying trend — water sources may become less reliable over time

For poultry farmers in Kwara:

- Reduce the number of birds per cage. Do not overcrowd.
- Open the sides of your poultry house for ventilation.
- Feed during cooler hours (early morning, late evening).
- Add vitamins and electrolytes to drinking water.
- During heavy rains and flooding, ensure housing is raised off the ground and leak-proof.

For fish farmers in Kwara:

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 and stop fish from escaping

Action	When to Do It	Why
Have harvest nets ready	Before JAS period	If flooding threatens, you may need to harvest quickly
Monitor water levels	Throughout dry season	With the drying trend, water levels may drop

THE ROAD DISRUPTION WARNING

Kwara has **22 road sections** at risk of flooding in 2026.

What this means:

- Some roads, especially those near the Niger River, will become impassable during the flood season
- The Jebba area may be affected
- You may not be able to travel between some communities
- The road connecting Kwara to Niger and Kogi states may be affected

What you should do:

- Stock up on essential supplies (food, medicine, fuel) before the flood peak (by late September)
 - If you need to travel for work or market, plan your trips before October
 - Identify alternative routes before roads are flooded
 - Listen to NIHSA and NEMA warnings about road closures
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THE JEBBA DAM

The Jebba Dam is a hydroelectric dam on the Niger River in Kwara State.

What you should know about the Jebba Dam:

- The dam can release water suddenly, causing water levels to rise downstream
- Dam operations — particularly unscheduled releases — remain difficult to predict
- The AFO notes that dam operations represent a source of uncertainty in the forecast

What to do if you live downstream of the Jebba Dam:

- Pay attention to NIHSA warnings about dam releases
- If you see water levels rising unusually fast, move to higher ground immediately
- Do not assume the dam will control all floodwater — heavy rainfall can overwhelm dams

THE WORSENING DROUGHT TREND: LONG-TERM PREPARATION

The AFO's warning about a "clear drying trend" in the Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor is important for long-term planning.

What this means for the future:

- Groundwater levels (wells and boreholes) are declining over time
- The dry season is getting drier
- What worked for your parents may not work for you

What you can do:

- **Harvest rainwater** during the rainy season. Store it in tanks or ponds for dry season use.
 - **Dig deeper wells** if your current well is drying up.
 - **Use water-efficient farming techniques** like mulching and drip irrigation.
 - **Plant drought-tolerant crops** like sorghum and millet in addition to rice.
 - **Work with neighbors** to share water resources during dry periods.
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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. **For livestock:** Move animals to higher ground before the water arrives. Do not wait.

If you are near the Niger River: Pay attention to water levels at Jebba. If you see the river rising, do not wait for an official warning. Move to higher ground.

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?
- 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 canoe or boat, keep it ready for emergency use.

For farmers: Store harvested crops in elevated storage. Do not keep bags of grain on the floor. If possible, move stored crops away from the Niger River floodplain.

For livestock owners: Identify high ground where you will move animals during flooding. The October-November flood peak is the biggest danger.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR KWARA

Unlike states in the far north, Kwara does not face extreme "Very Dry" drought. But the drying trend is a concern.

Dry season outlook (October 2026 - March 2027):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
North-Central (including Kwara)	Moderately Dry to Slightly Dry	The dry season will be drier than normal.

Long-term trend: The Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor shows a clear drying trend. Prepare for less water in the future.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN KWARA

Agency	What They Do	Contact
NIHSA	Issues flood warnings. Monitors Jebba gauge station.	0800-NIHSA-NG
NEMA	Disaster response and relief	0800-NEMA-NG

Agency	What They Do	Contact
Kwara State SEMA	State-level emergency response	Contact your LGA Agriculture Officer or LGA Chairman for local numbers
NiMet	Weather forecasts	www.nimet.gov.ng
Jebba Dam operators	Dam release information	Ask your LGA chairman for contact information

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR KWARA

- **You will see significant flooding in 2026.** Kwara is in High Flood Risk during AMJ, JAS, and ON.
- **The worst months are July, August, and September (JAS).** But October and November also carry significant risk.
- **The Niger River is your main flood danger.** Low-lying communities along the river (especially in Jebba and Patigi areas) are at highest risk.
- **The Jebba gauge station is your early warning.** When discharge approaches 6,200 m³/s, prepare for flooding.
- **22 road sections in Kwara are at risk of flooding.** Stock up on supplies before the flood peak.
- **Farmers near the Niger River:** Plant early-maturing varieties. Harvest before October if possible. Store crops in elevated storage.
- **You have a long-term drying trend.** The AFO warns that the Niger-Kogi-Kwara corridor is getting drier. Harvest rainwater. Dig deeper wells. Plant drought-tolerant crops.
- **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.

