

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR ONDO 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 ONDO IN 2026

Ondo State faces serious flooding in 2026, especially in its low-lying areas, coastal communities, and urban centers. The state is part of the Western Littoral hydrological zone, which means it shares river systems with Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, and other South-West states.

Why is Ondo vulnerable to flooding? Three main reasons:

First, Ondo has several rivers and streams. The Owena River, the Oni River, and other waterways flow through the state. When heavy rains fall, these rivers swell and overflow into nearby communities.

Second, Ondo has a long coastline. The state faces the Atlantic Ocean, which means coastal communities are vulnerable to **storm surges** and **tidal flooding**. The AFO's PRESAGG forecast predicts above-normal river flows for coastal basins.

Third, Ondo has urban flooding problems. Akure, the state capital, and other towns have drainage channels that are often blocked with garbage. When heavy rain falls, water pools on roads and enters homes.

The Three Flood Periods for Ondo:

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rains intensify. Rivers begin to rise. Urban areas with blocked drains see flash floods. Coastal areas may see tidal flooding.	Low to Medium
July, August, September (Peak rainy season)	This is the most dangerous time. Heavy rains fill up rivers. Flooding spreads to low-lying communities. Urban flooding worsens. Coastal surges push ocean water inland.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding)	Flooding continues. Recession flooding affects the state. Coastal surges remain a risk.	Medium to High



WHICH PARTS OF ONDO ARE AT RISK

Ondo State falls within **Hydrological Area VI (Western Littoral)** . This means Ondo is in the same flood zone as Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Edo, Delta, Kogi, and Kwara.

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

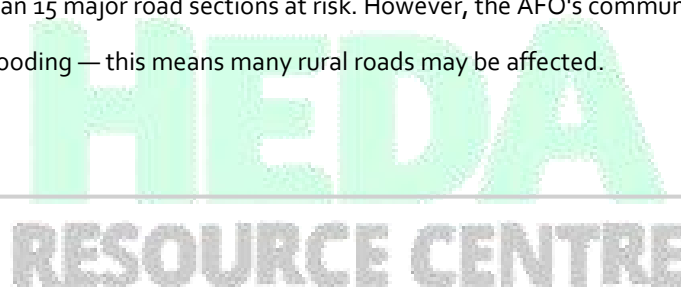
Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-VI which includes Ondo)	What This Means for Ondo
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Season	Risk Level	Number of Communities (across HA-VI which includes Ondo)	What This Means for Ondo
AMJ (April-May-June)	High	849 communities (for Delta, Edo, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Osun combined)	Early flooding begins. Low-lying areas near rivers see water.
JAS (July-August-September)	High	1,195 communities (for Delta, Edo, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo combined)	This is peak flooding. Widespread inundation across the state.
ON (October-November)	High	1,024 communities (for Delta, Edo, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo combined)	Late flooding continues.

Annual total for Ondo: Ondo is among the states with High Flood Risk across all three seasons.

Many communities across the state will see flooding in 2026.

For roads: The AFO's road risk table (Table 4.26) does not list Ondo separately. This suggests that Ondo has fewer than 15 major road sections at risk. However, the AFO's community risk numbers show significant flooding — this means many rural roads may be affected.



THE COASTAL FLOODING DANGER

Ondo's coastline makes the state vulnerable to **storm surges** — when the ocean pushes water inland.

What the AFO says about coastal flooding:

The PRESAGG 2026 forecast (from AGRHYMET, cited in the AFO) predicts **above-normal river flows** for coastal basins in southern Nigeria. The AFO specifically confirms High Flood Risk for coastal communities in Ondo as part of the South-South and coastal South-West zone.

What this means for coastal Ondo (Ilaje, Ese-Odo, Okitipupa, Irele areas):

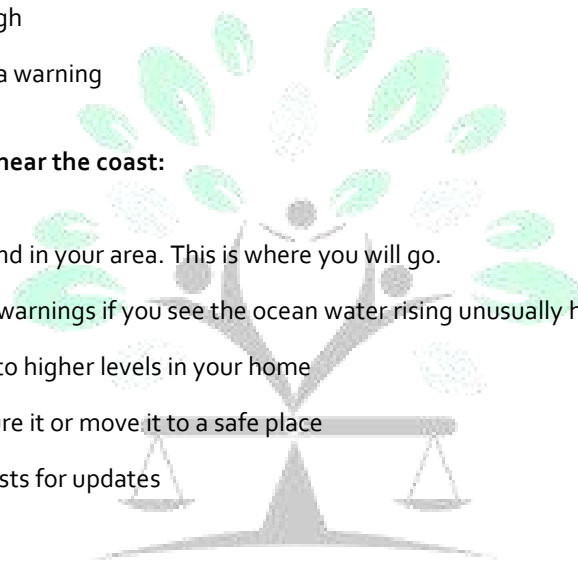
- Ocean water will be higher than usual
- Storm surges can push water inland, flooding coastal communities
- This can happen even when it is not raining (high tides, strong winds)
- Low-lying coastal areas are at highest risk

Signs that a coastal storm surge may be coming:

- Strong wind blows from the ocean toward the land for many hours
- The water level in creeks and rivers rises even when there has been no rain
- The tide is unusually high
- 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
- Listen to radio broadcasts for updates



THE OWENA RIVER: YOUR MAIN INLAND FLOOD DANGER

The Owena River is the major river in Ondo State. It flows through the central part of the state and eventually empties into the Atlantic Ocean.

What you should know about the Owena River:

- It is fed by rainfall from the highlands of Ondo and Ekiti States
- When upstream areas get heavy rain, the river can rise quickly
- Low-lying communities along the river are at highest risk
- The river's floodplain includes farming areas

What to do if you live near the Owena River:

- Know the nearest high ground. Where will you go if the river rises?
 - Pay attention to NIHSA warnings
 - 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.
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URBAN FLOODING IN AKURE AND OTHER TOWNS

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

What causes urban flooding in Akure and other towns:

- Drainage channels blocked with plastic, sand, and garbage (the number one cause)
- Buildings constructed in areas where water naturally flows
- Roads that do not have proper drainage
- Rapid development without proper planning

Known flood-prone areas in Ondo (based on historical records, consistent with AFO risk assessment):

- **Akure** – low-lying areas, areas with poor drainage, especially around the city center and along stream channels
- **Owo** – low-lying areas
- **Ondo City** – low-lying areas
- **Okitipupa** – low-lying areas near the coast
- **Ilaje** – coastal areas, extremely low-lying, at high risk from both river and coastal flooding

What you can do in Akure and other towns:

- **Do not throw garbage into drains.** This is the most important thing you can do.
- 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.
- Do not build structures on top of drainage channels or natural waterways.

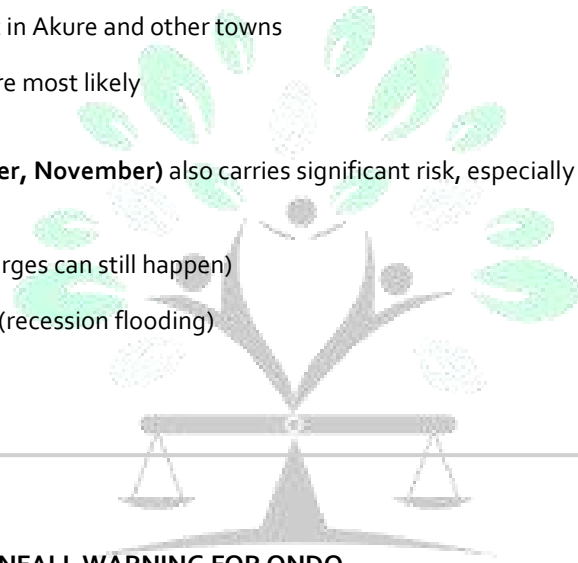
WHEN IS THE WORST TIME FOR ONDO?

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

- Heavy monsoon rains fall across the state
- The Owena River and other waterways swell and overflow
- Low-lying communities are inundated
- Urban flooding is worst in Akure and other towns
- Coastal storm surges are most likely

The **ON period (October, November)** also carries significant risk, especially for:

- Coastal areas (storm surges can still happen)
- Low-lying inland areas (recession flooding)



ABOVE-NORMAL RAINFALL WARNING FOR ONDO

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 Ondo:

- The Owena River and other waterways will carry **more water than usual** in 2026
- Coastal waters will be higher than usual
- Low-lying communities along rivers and the coast face higher risk of inundation
- The growing season will be wetter than normal

The AFO states:

"Above-normal river flows forecast for coastal basins confirm the High Flood Risk classification for South-South and coastal communities in Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, and Cross River states."

Ondo's coastal areas (Ilaje, Ese-Odo) are part of this coastal risk zone.

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN ONDO

Ondo is a major agricultural state, known for cocoa, cassava, yam, maize, rice, oil palm, and vegetables. Here is how different crops will be affected.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Cocoa (major crop)	Year-round, but disease risk increases in wet conditions	Cocoa is Ondo's most important cash crop. The above-normal rainfall and wet conditions increase the risk of black pod disease. Watch your cocoa farms carefully. Remove infected pods promptly. Prune trees to improve air circulation. Ensure drainage channels are clear.
Cassava	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).
Yam	JAS (July-September)	Plant on mounds in March-April. Plant in batches. Harvest before October if possible.
Maize	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Use early to medium-maturing varieties (90-110 days). Plant in batches.
Rice (lowland areas)	JAS and ON	Rice can handle water, but too much will drown it. Plant early-maturing varieties. Clear drainage channels.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Oil Palm	Year-round	Oil palm can tolerate wet conditions, but young seedlings can be drowned. Ensure drainage channels are clear in oil palm plantations.
Vegetables (okra, pepper, tomatoes, leafy greens)	JAS and ON	Use raised beds. During heavy rain, watch for fungal diseases. Improve air circulation between plants.
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.

Special note for Ondo cocoa farmers:

Cocoa is the lifeblood of Ondo's economy. The above-normal rainfall and flooding risk in 2026 pose a serious threat to cocoa farms.

What cocoa farmers should do:

1. **Watch for black pod disease.** This disease thrives in wet conditions. Check your farms regularly.
2. **Remove infected pods immediately.** Do not leave them on the ground. Bury them or burn them.
3. **Prune your cocoa trees.** Good air circulation helps prevent fungal diseases.
4. **Ensure good drainage.** Dig drainage channels in your cocoa plantation so water does not pool around the trees.
5. **Harvest pods as soon as they ripen.** Do not leave ripe pods on trees in wet weather.

WHAT LIVESTOCK AND FISH FARMERS IN ONDO 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
Have an evacuation plan for animals	Before flood season	Where will you take your animals when water rises?

For poultry farmers in Ondo:

- 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 Ondo:

- 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 Ondo:

- 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 (especially coastal areas like Ilaje), have a plan to move pigs to higher ground.

For fish farmers in Ondo:

Fish farming is practiced in many parts of Ondo, especially in areas with access to water. Coastal fish farmers face additional risks from storm surges.

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

Action	When to Do It	Why
Have harvest nets ready	Before JAS period	If flooding threatens, you may need to harvest quickly
Monitor water salinity (coastal areas)	Continuously	Storm surges can bring saltwater into freshwater ponds. Most freshwater fish cannot survive in saltwater.

Special warning for fish farmers in coastal Ondo (Ilaje, Ese-Odo): Storm surges can push saltwater into your ponds. Have a plan to protect your ponds from saltwater intrusion. If you see salinity rising, harvest your fish quickly.

THE AUGUST DRY SPELL (LITTLE DRY SEASON)

Ondo may experience a reduction in rainfall around August (the "August Break").

What to do during the August dry spell:

- Store water in tanks, drums, or ponds during July for use in August
- If you have vegetable farms, be prepared to water them if rain stops
- Use stored fodder for livestock if grasses dry up
- Do not assume the dry spell means the flood season is over. Flooding can return in September.

THE ROAD DISRUPTION WARNING

The AFO's road risk table does not list Ondo separately, meaning fewer than 15 major road sections are identified. However, this does not mean roads will not flood.

What you should do:

- Stock up on essential supplies before the flood peak
 - If you need to travel for work or market, plan your trips before September
 - Listen to NIHSA and NEMA warnings about road closures
 - In coastal areas (Ilaje, Ese-Odo), roads may be affected by both rain and storm surges
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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 in a coastal area (Ilaje, Ese-Odo): Pay attention to wind and ocean conditions, not just rain. Storm surges can come even when it is not raining.

If you are near the Owena River: Pay attention to the river level. If you see it 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 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.
- Do not throw garbage into drains.

For farmers: Store harvested crops in elevated storage. Dig drainage channels in low-lying fields.

For cocoa farmers: Prune trees. Clear drainage channels. Watch for black pod disease.

For livestock owners: Identify high ground where you can move animals during flooding.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR ONDO

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

Dry season outlook (October 2026 - March 2027):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
South-West (including Ondo)	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, coastal surges can still happen during the dry season. High tides and strong winds can push ocean water onto land even when it is not raining.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN ONDO

Agency	What They Do	Contact
NIHSA	Issues flood warnings	o800-NIHSA-NG
NEMA	Disaster response and relief	o800-NEMA-NG
Ondo 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 ONDO

- **You will see significant flooding in 2026.** Ondo is in High Flood Risk during AMJ, JAS, and ON.
- **The worst months are July, August, and September (JAS).** This is the peak flood season for the state.
- **You have two types of flooding:** River flooding (from the Owena River and other waterways) and coastal flooding (storm surges from the Atlantic Ocean). Pay attention to both.
- **Coastal areas (Ilaje, Ese-Odo)** are at highest risk from storm surges. Pay attention to wind and ocean conditions.
- **Akure faces urban flooding.** Keep drains clear. Do not throw garbage into drainage channels.
- **Cocoa farmers:** This is very important. Above-normal rainfall increases the risk of black pod disease. Watch your farms carefully. Remove infected pods promptly.
- **Farmers:** Plant on mounds or ridges. Clear drainage channels. Watch for fungal diseases.

- **Fish farmers in coastal areas:** Monitor water salinity. Storm surges can bring saltwater into freshwater ponds.
- **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, watch your cocoa farms, and stay alert through November.

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

PREPARE NOW. DO NOT WAIT.

