

2026 FLOOD GUIDE FOR PLATEAU 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 PLATEAU IN 2026

Plateau State has a unique flood profile. The state sits on high ground — the Jos Plateau — which gives it a different flood pattern from lowland states. However, this does not mean Plateau is safe from flooding. The state still faces serious flooding, especially in low-lying areas, along river courses, and in urban centers like Jos.

Why is Plateau vulnerable to flooding? Three main reasons:

First, Plateau is the source of many rivers. The Jos Plateau is a water tower for Nigeria. Several major rivers begin on the plateau, including tributaries of the Benue River, the Kaduna River, and the Gongola River. When heavy rains fall, these rivers swell and flow downstream — but they also flood in the plateau area itself.

Second, Plateau has a complex terrain. The state has high hills and deep valleys. When heavy rain falls, water runs quickly off the hills and collects in the valleys. This causes **flash flooding** — sudden, dangerous flooding with little warning.

Third, Plateau has urban flooding problems. Jos and other towns have grown rapidly. Many drainage channels are blocked with garbage. Buildings have been constructed in natural waterways. The AFO lists Plateau among states with High Flood Risk in the JAS period.

The Three Flood Periods for Plateau:

When?	What to Expect	How Serious?
April, May, June (Early rains)	Rains begin. Flash floods can occur in valleys. Urban areas with blocked drains see water pooling.	Low to Medium
July, August, September (Peak rainy season)	This is the most dangerous time. Heavy rains cause rivers to swell. Flash floods happen in valleys. Urban flooding worsens.	Medium to High
October, November (Late flooding)	Flooding continues, especially in areas downstream of the plateau. Late-season crops are at risk.	Medium to High

WHICH PARTS OF PLATEAU ARE AT RISK

Plateau State falls within **Hydrological Area II (Niger Central)** , **Hydrological Area III (Upper Benue)** , and **Hydrological Area IV (Lower Benue)** . This means Plateau is at the headwaters of multiple river systems.

From the AFO's HA-II tables (Niger Central):

Season	Risk Level	What This Means for Plateau
JAS	High	Plateau is part of HA-II High Risk communities (1,832 communities for FCT, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Plateau, Zamfara)
ON	High	Plateau is part of HA-II High Risk communities (1,405 communities for FCT, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Plateau, Zamfara)

From the AFO's HA-III tables (Upper Benue):

Season	Risk Level	What This Means for Plateau
AMJ	High	Plateau is part of HA-III High Risk communities (3,301 communities for Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe — includes parts of Plateau)
JAS	High	Plateau is part of HA-III High Risk communities (6,176 communities for Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe)
ON	High	Plateau is part of HA-III High Risk communities (4,744 communities for Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe)

From the AFO's HA-IV tables (Lower Benue):

Season	Risk Level	What This Means for Plateau
JAS	High	Plateau is part of HA-IV High Risk communities (2,399 communities for Benue, Cross River, FCT, Kaduna, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba)
ON	High	Plateau is part of HA-IV High Risk communities (2,026 communities for Benue, Cross River, FCT, Kaduna, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba)

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

For roads: Plateau has **33 road sections** identified as at risk of flooding in 2026 (Table 4.26 of the AFO).

THE JOS PLATEAU: WATER TOWER AND FLOOD SOURCE

The Jos Plateau is one of the highest areas in Nigeria. It receives significant rainfall, and many rivers begin here.

What you should know about the Jos Plateau:

- Rivers that begin on the plateau include the Kaduna River (flows to the Niger), the Gongola River (flows to the Benue), and several Benue tributaries
- When heavy rain falls, water runs quickly off the hillsides into the valleys
- This causes **flash flooding** in low-lying areas and valleys
- The same water that floods Plateau will later flood downstream states like Benue, Kogi, and Taraba

What to do if you live in a valley or low-lying area on the plateau:

- Flash floods can happen with very little warning
 - Know the nearest high ground. When heavy rain falls, move there quickly
 - Do not wait for official warnings if you see water rising
 - Never try to cross flooded streams or rivers — the water can rise faster than you can run
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THE KADUNA RIVER AND OTHER WATERWAYS

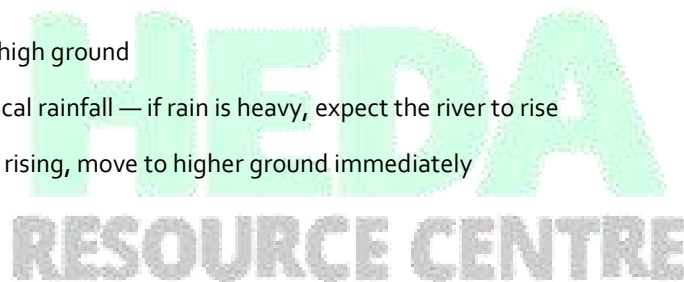
Several rivers flow through Plateau State, including the Kaduna River (which flows west toward Niger State), the Gongola River (which flows east toward Adamawa), and other Benue tributaries.

What you should know about these rivers:

- They are fed by rainfall on the Jos Plateau
- When heavy rains fall, the rivers can rise quickly
- Low-lying communities along these rivers are at highest risk
- The rivers are smaller than the Niger or Benue, but they can still flood dangerously

What to do if you live near a river in Plateau:

- Know the nearest high ground
- Pay attention to local rainfall — if rain is heavy, expect the river to rise
- If you see the river rising, move to higher ground immediately



URBAN FLOODING IN JOS AND OTHER TOWNS

Jos and other towns in Plateau State face **urban flooding** when heavy rain falls on blocked drainage channels.

What causes urban flooding in Jos:

- Drainage channels blocked with plastic, sand, and garbage (the number one cause)

- Buildings constructed in areas where water naturally flows (stream channels, low-lying areas)
- Roads that do not have proper drainage
- Rapid development without proper planning
- The hilly terrain means water flows quickly downhill into low-lying areas of the city

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

- **Jos** – low-lying areas, areas near streams, areas at the bottom of hills where water collects
- **Bukuru** – low-lying areas, mining areas where the ground has been disturbed
- **Barkin Ladi** – low-lying areas
- **Pankshin** – low-lying areas in the valleys
- **Shendam** – low-lying areas near the Benue tributaries
- **Langtang** – low-lying areas near rivers

What you can do in Jos 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 or at the bottom of a hill, prepare sandbags to divert water away from your door.
- Do not build structures on top of drainage channels or natural waterways.



FLASH FLOOD WARNING

Because of Plateau's hilly terrain, **flash flooding** is a major danger. Flash floods happen when heavy rain falls on hills and the water rushes down into valleys very quickly.

What you should know about flash floods:

- They can happen with very little warning
- Water can rise from ankle-deep to chest-deep in minutes

- The water moves fast — it can sweep you off your feet and wash away cars
- Flash floods often happen in places where it is not raining at that moment (rain fell upstream, on the hills)
- They are most common in valleys, at the bottom of hills, and along small streams

What to do if a flash flood warning is issued:

1. **Move to high ground immediately.** Do not wait.
2. Do not try to walk or drive through floodwater.
3. If you are in a valley, get out as fast as you can.
4. Do not go back to get belongings. Your life is more important.

WHAT CROPS ARE AT RISK IN PLATEAU

Plateau is a major agricultural state, known for potatoes, maize, vegetables, yam, cassava, and temperate crops that grow well in the cooler climate. Here is how different crops will be affected.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Potatoes (Irish potatoes)	JAS (July-September)	Potatoes do not like wet feet. Waterlogging causes rot. Plant on ridges. Ensure good drainage. Harvest before the peak of the rainy season if possible.
Maize	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Use early to medium-maturing varieties (90-110 days). Plant in batches.

Crop	When It Is Most at Risk	What to Do
Vegetables (cabbage, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, lettuce)	JAS and ON	Use raised beds. During heavy rain, watch for fungal diseases. Improve air circulation between plants. In the cooler plateau climate, fungal diseases can be a serious problem.
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).
Rice (where grown, in lowland areas)	JAS and ON	Rice can handle water, but too much will drown it. Plant early-maturing varieties. Clear drainage channels.
Soybean	JAS (July-September)	Plant on ridges. Choose early-maturing varieties.
Fruit (apples, plums, etc. - grown on the plateau)	JAS and ON	Fruit trees do not like standing water. Ensure good drainage in orchards. Harvest ripe fruit before heavy rains to prevent rot.

WHAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN PLATEAU 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 cold	June-September (rainy season on the plateau is cool)	Young animals can get cold and wet. Provide shelter.
Have an evacuation plan for animals	Before flood season	Where will you take your animals when water rises?

For poultry farmers in Plateau:

- Reduce the number of birds per cage. Do not overcrowd.
- Open the sides of your poultry house for ventilation.
- During cold, wet weather, provide extra bedding to keep birds warm and dry.
- 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 Plateau:

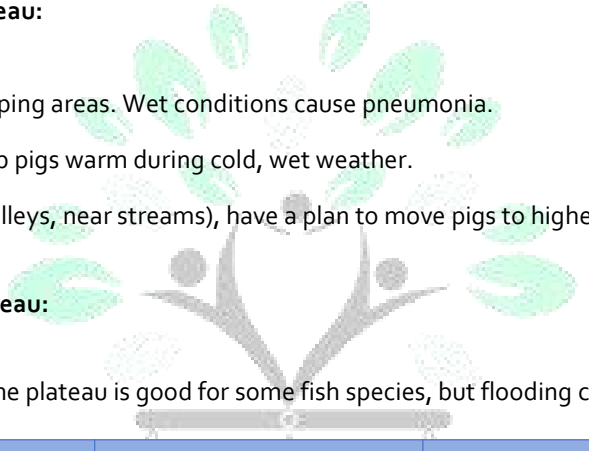
- Raised housing is essential. Do not let animals sleep on wet ground.
- Watch for foot rot. If an animal starts limping, treat immediately.
- Cut and store grasses in June and July. Use these during the August dry spell when grass may be scarce.
- During heavy rains and flooding, move animals to higher ground.
- Protect young animals from cold, wet weather.

For pig farmers in Plateau:

- Pigs must have dry sleeping areas. Wet conditions cause pneumonia.
- Provide bedding to keep pigs warm during cold, wet weather.
- In flood-prone areas (valleys, near streams), have a plan to move pigs to higher ground.

For fish farmers in Plateau:

The cooler climate on the plateau is good for some fish species, but flooding can still damage ponds.



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
Have harvest nets ready	Before JAS period	If flooding threatens, you may need to harvest quickly

Action	When to Do It	Why
Monitor water temperature	Continuously	Heavy rain can cool pond water suddenly, stressing fish

THE AUGUST DRY SPELL (LITTLE DRY SEASON)

Plateau 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

Plateau has **33 road sections** at risk of flooding in 2026.

What this means:

- Many roads, especially in valleys and low-lying areas, will become impassable during heavy rain
- Roads on the plateau can be dangerous during flash floods — water can wash across the road without warning
- You may not be able to travel between communities
- Emergency services may not reach you quickly

What you should do:

- Stock up on essential supplies before the flood peak
 - If you need to travel, check weather forecasts first
 - Never drive across a flooded road — even a few inches of water can sweep away a car
 - Listen to NIHSA and NEMA warnings about road 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. **For livestock:** Move animals to higher ground before the water arrives. Do not wait.

If you are in a valley or low-lying area: This is the most dangerous place during flash floods. If heavy rain is falling, move to higher ground immediately. Do not wait for an official warning.

If you are in Jos or other towns: Pay attention to local drainage. If water is pooling on roads, do not attempt to drive through it.

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? On the plateau, "high ground" might be the slope above your house.
- 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 potato farmers, ensure good drainage to prevent rot.

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

THE DROUGHT SITUATION IN PLATEAU

Unlike states in the far north, Plateau does not face severe drought. But the dry season is drier than normal.

Wet season outlook (April-September 2026):

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
North-Central (including Plateau)	Slightly Dry to Normal	You will have near-normal rainfall on the plateau.

Dry season outlook (October 2026 - March 2027):

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

Zone	Forecast	What This Means
Plateau)	Dry	normal.

What this means for Plateau:

- You do not have the extreme "Very Dry" drought of the far north
- But you will still need to manage water carefully during dry season
- The Jos Plateau's streams and rivers will have less water than usual in the dry season

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP IN PLATEAU

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

- **You will see significant flooding in 2026.** Plateau 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.
- **Flash flooding is a major danger** because of the hilly terrain. Water runs off the hills quickly into valleys. If you live in a valley, move to higher ground when heavy rain falls.
- **The Jos Plateau is the source of many rivers** — the Kaduna River, the Gongola River, and Benue tributaries. These rivers flood in Plateau before flowing downstream to other states.
- **Jos and other towns face urban flooding.** Keep drains clear. Do not throw garbage into drainage channels.
- **33 road sections in Plateau are at risk of flooding.** Never drive across a flooded road.
- **Potato farmers:** Potatoes do not like wet feet. Plant on ridges. Ensure good drainage. Harvest before the peak of the rainy season if possible.
- **Vegetable farmers:** Use raised beds. Watch for fungal diseases — the cool, wet conditions on the plateau can increase disease.
- **The dry season will be Moderately Dry to Slightly Dry.** Not severe, but drier than normal.
- **Do not wait until water arrives.** Prepare your emergency kit, know your escape route, keep your drains clear, and move to higher ground immediately when flash floods threaten.

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

PREPARE NOW. DO NOT WAIT.