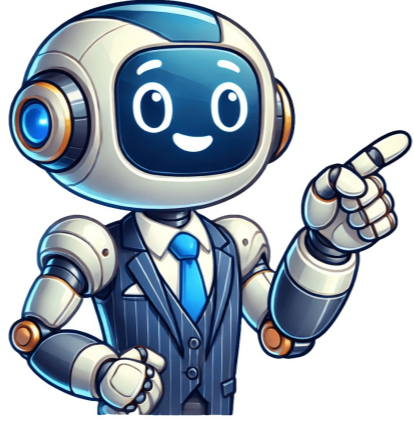


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List of agro-ecological zones in nigeria

These man-made constraints often lead to serious degradation of the pastoral resources and in some cases to an irreversible process of desertification, especially in the Sahel zone. The nomadic Fulani roam about this zone in search of fodder and water for their Livestock. A number of timber trees such as the African Mahogany, the scented Sapele wood (Entandrophragma cylindricum), and Iroko (Chlorophora excelsa) to mention but three are found in this zone. As you move inland, you'll first encounter the rainforest, then the derived savanna, followed by the Guinea savanna, and finally, the Sudan savanna and Sahel zones in the far north. The soil tends to be less fertile than in the more southern zones. In the humid rain forest are found economic cash crops such as Oil Palm, (Elaeis guineensis), Cocoa (Theobroma cacao), Rubber (Hevea brasiliensis) Banana/Plantain (Musa spp.) and Cola nut (Cola nitida). It is the broadest vegetation zone in the country and it occupies almost half of its area. What is the significance of the mangrove swamp zone? Nigeria is found in the Tropics, where the climate is seasonally damp and very humid. It is characterized by grasslands with scattered trees and a marked wet and dry season. The trees here are generally deciduous, shedding their leaves in the dry season to conserve water. The savannah in general has enormous potential for food production in the country. Is there a Sahel savanna zone in Nigeria? The zone has great potential for the cultivation of Maize, Wheat, Carrot, Cabbage, and other exotic vegetables but the mountainous nature of the zone prevents commercial farming. It is a belt of a mixture of trees and tall grasses in the South, with shorter grasses and fewer trees in the North. This savanna is known for its tall grasses, which can grow to impressive heights during the rainy season. O. Presently the drier end of its inland side is becoming reduced to derived Guinea Savannah because of felling and clearings. Yes, Nigeria has free trade zones such as the Calabar Free Trade Zone (CFTZ), Kano Free Trade Zone (KFTZ), and others. 7. The main constraints on feed resources in all the zones are the destruction of perennial tree cover for firewood, bush fires caused by hunters; livestock rearing, and overgrazing. It is the transition between the tropical rainforest and guinea savanna zones. Rainforest Moving inland from the coast, we encounter the lush rainforest zone. The Sudan savanna experiences a longer dry season, receives less rainfall, and has shorter grasses and fewer trees than the Guinea savanna. It is characterized by either very short grasses of not more than one meter high located in –between sand dunes. These zones represent a rich tapestry of ecosystems, each playing a crucial role in Nigeria’s biodiversity and natural resources. This is the last ecological zoological zone with proximity to the fringes of the fast- encroaching Sahara desert. Agriculture plays a crucial role in the Nigeria economy contributing 30% to the GDP, second to oil and acts as an income generating sector for most of households. The natural vegetative zones that exist in the country are governed by the combined effects of temperature, humidity, rainfall, and particularly, the variations that occur in the rainfall. The rainforest zone in Nigeria has a tropical climate characterized by high temperatures, high humidity, and abundant rainfall throughout the year, but the intensity varies by season. 5. Why is the Guinea savanna the most extensive zone in Nigeria? tomentosa form the bulk of the scattered woodland. Derived Savanna: A transitional zone between the rainforest and the true savanna. Guinea Savanna The Guinea savanna is the most extensive ecological zone in Nigeria, occupying a large portion of the central part of the country. The Guinea Savanna stretches through states such as Niger, Taraba, Kaduna, Bauchi, and others. 15. These areas are particularly prevalent in the Niger Delta region. At the same time, the drainage system of rivers and streams into the Lake Chad basin has favored inland irrigation, without which cultivation would be virtually impossible. The Sudan savanna has a longer dry season and experiences more extreme temperatures than other zones. However, in some parts of the East and many areas near the coast, the high rainfall has led to badly leached soils and severe erosion in some places. The Savannah landforms an excellent natural habitat for a large number of grazing livestock such as cattle, goats, horses, sheep, camels, and donkeys. Guinea savannah zone has a unimodal rainfall distribution with the average annual temperature and rainfall of 27.3°C and 1051.7mm respectively where the wet season lasts for 6–8 months[i]. It is characterized by abundant short grasses of 1.5 – 2m and few stunted trees hardly above 15m. This clearing is due to several periodical bush-burning that occurs during the dry season between November and April, carried out to either assist in farm clearance or hunting. These economic zones aren’t directly based on ecological zones, but certain industries may utilize resources prevalent in particular regions. The rainforest zone is vital due to its exceptionally high biodiversity, carbon sequestration capabilities, and role in maintaining regional climate patterns. Maize and cassava are widely grown throughout Nigeria, while other crops include yams, rice, and various vegetables and fruits. These can lead to habitat loss, soil degradation, and changes in vegetation patterns, including the creation of the derived savanna. FAO, Rome, Italy. This zone is found immediately after the tropical rainforest zone. The Montane zone vegetation is covered with grass at the top and base, while forests cover the slopes, favored by moisture-laden wind. This luxuriant vegetation belt stretches from the western border of Nigeria to Benin Republic, through a narrow stretch on the Niger-Benue river system into the extensive area in the South-East of the country. In the Northern Guinea Savannah species such as Isoberlinia doka and I. These areas are often diurnally flooded by tides and are crucial for coastal protection, acting as natural barriers against erosion and storm surges. Bush burning and erosion as a result of overgrazing by animals especially cattle constitute a major problem to agricultural production in the zone. Understanding these zones is essential for effective environmental management and sustainable development. It spans almost the entire Northern States bordering the Niger Republic and covers over one-quarter of Nigeria’s total area. Nigeria’s agricultural economy is built around agroecological zones. This area is characterized by a prolonged rainy season, resulting in high annual rainfall above 2000mm, thereby ensuring an adequate supply of water and promoting perennial tree growth. These areas are not just biologically significant but also densely populated with several major cities, impacting the ecosystem. Comparatively, there are fewer trees in the Northern Guinea Savannah than in the Southern Guinea Savannah and the trees are not as tall as those found in the Southern Guinea Savannah. The Guinea Savannah is characterized by grasses such as Pennisetum, Andropogon, Panicum, Chloris, Hyparrhenia, Paspalum, and Melinis. This zone exhibits a mix of forest and grassland characteristics, with scattered trees and a more open canopy than the rainforest. Why is the rainforest zone important? It extends from Ondo, Edo, Anambra and Enugu States in the South, through Oyo State to beyond Zaria in Kaduna State. The average annual rainfall is 1450mm. The soil is also fertile due to organic matter from decomposed grasses. [ii] Source: Materials from [iii] F.A. Sowunmi and J. It’s home to numerous endemic species and plays a key part in the water cycle. The appearance of this zone differs from season to season. These are the Mangrove Swamp, Rainforest, Derived savanna, Guinea savanna, Sudan savanna ... The country has six distinct agro-ecological zones transiting in south-north direction from the Atlantic coast to the arid savanna of Sahel. How do the ecological zones of Nigeria transition from South to North? All information is provided on an as-is basis. States like Niger, Taraba, Kaduna, Bauchi, Kano, Adamawa, Benue, Kwara, and Kogi contain parts of the Guinea savanna, while states in the far north are within the Sudan and Sahel savanna. This zone is characterized by shorter grasses and more sparse tree cover. Rainforest: Located inland from the coastal region. It is also found also in low lying swampland associated with rivers and Lagoon near the coast and under the influence of the sea. Nigeria can be classified into eight agro ecological zones based on rainfalls and temperatures (Table 1). The high influx of water deposit vast quantities of silt, mud, and sandy materials into this area. The grass vegetation is interspersed with farms and thick bush trees such as Shea Butter tree (Butyrospermum parkii) and Acacia albida. 4. The coastal swamp area is not widely cultivated except for swamp rice in places where they are stabilized and non-saline. Mangrove swamps are often considered a separate ecosystem within the coastal area. 10. 13. The environmental factors allow it to extend further than other zones. The area is dominated by several varieties of Acacia and Date palms. Also found are some principal staple food crops such as Yam, Cocoyams, Sweet Potato, Maize, Rice, Groundnut, Cowpeas and Beans as well as a number of fruits. How does human activity impact Nigeria’s ecological zones? 11. The trees are shorter and more scattered than in the Guinea savanna. Guinea Savanna: The most expansive zone, located in the central part of the country. The Fulani who live in great numbers in the area turns the available fields into good pasture for their grazing animals. 308 pp. This vegetation belt, on freshwater wetlands, occurs further inland, beyond the reach of tidal waters. Nigeria has two main biomes: the rainforest and the savanna. Bush fallows, villages, and farms are found scattered throughout the zone. This zone demonstrates a human impact on the natural environment, with a reduction in forest and increase in grassland. The rainforest is characterized by a multi-layered canopy, consisting of tall trees, understory plants, and a forest floor covered in leaf litter. They also serve as vital nurseries for various marine species. Sudan Savanna: Found in the northern reaches of Nigeria. A kintola (2010) Effect of Climatic Variability on Maize Production in Nigeria. Source: wikipedia source: The humid tropical forest zone of the South that has longer rains is capable of supporting a number of plantation crops such as cocoa, oil palm, rubber, coffee, cotton and staple crops like yam, cassava, cocoyam, sweet potatoes, melon, groundnut, rice maize, and cowpeas. Based on the above, Nigeria’s agro-ecological zones can be classified into: - (i) The Mangrove forest and coastal vegetation (ii) The freshwater swamp forest (iii) The tropical high forest zone (iv) The derived Guinea Savannah (v) The Guinea Savannah zone (vi) The Sudan savannah (Shortgrass savanna) (vii) The Sahel savannah (Marginal Savanna) (viii) The Montane vegetation This is found in places near the coast that is under the influence of brackish water commonly found in the Niger Delta. These tall grasses are characteristic of the Guinea Savannah proper. While there is some variation in classification, the most widely accepted model identifies five primary ecological zones that stretch across the country from south to north, each with unique characteristics in terms of vegetation, climate, and biodiversity. Thus, the vegetation has undergone severe destruction in the process of clearing land for the cultivation of important economic crops such as Cotton, Groundnut, Sorghum, Millet, Maize, and Wheat. These are vital for maintaining ecosystem health and biodiversity. In view of the limitation of water resources, role of macroeconomic policies in ... The area of the country under this agro-ecological zone, are Ogun, Benin, Imo, Niger Delta and Cross River. Maize, Cassava, Yam, and Rice are the major crops grown in this zone. This ecosystem also includes other vegetation such as beach vegetation, and salt marshes. They are used for thatching mats and for providing rafter, poles, and stiff piassava fiber for the production of brooms. The biodiversity in this zone is incredibly rich with diverse flora and fauna, including various primates, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, making it a biological hotspot. As a rule, this zone is not cultivated without irrigation. Also found are Locust Bean trees (Parkia filicoidea), Shea Butter trees (Butyrospermum parkii) and Mangoes (Mangifera indica). Overview of the agro-ecological zones of Nigeria, with the boundary of the Nigerian Guinea Savannah indicated (adapted from Iloeje, 2001). Its vegetation is more drought-tolerant, which is a result of less rainfall. This zone consists of the larger part of the savannah zone and is sometimes divided into the Southern Guinea Savannah and Northern Guinea Savannah. These two biomes provide a wide array of biodiversity. It is essential for local fisheries and biodiversity. In the dry season, they tend to die and disappear and one can see for kilometers without obstruction. This zone consists of a mixture of trees. These are the Mangrove Swamp, Rainforest, Derived ... The Montane zone is located in the high altitude areas of the country like Jos Plateau. Mandara, Adamawa Mountain, and Obudu Plateau. Research Journal of Environmental and Earth Sciences 2(1): 19-30. Disclaimer: All data and information provided on this site is for informational purposes only. This zone is the major source of timber for the large construction and furniture making industry. This forms a major influence on the type of indigenous plants that grow successfully in different parts of the country. What causes the existence of the derived savanna zone? Agriculture in Nigeria. The zone is covered with scattered trees and tall grasses. Most of the tall grasses found in the derived Guinea Savannah are also found in the Guinea Savannah, however, they are less luxuriant. The mangrove swamp zone is crucial for coastal protection, acting as a buffer against erosion and storm surges. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). It is a continuation of the greater Sahel region of Africa, and is found in the far north. The vegetation here is adapted to withstand the long dry season, with species that are drought-tolerant. Due to bush burning, overgrazing, cultivation, and hunting activities over a long period in the zone, the high forest trees were destroyed and the forest that exist is now replaced with a mixture of grasses and scattered trees. www.agricultureenigeria.com makes no representations as to accuracy, completeness, correctness, suitability, or validity of any information on this site and will not be liable for any errors, omissions, or delays in this information or any losses, injuries, or damages arising from its display or use. Nigeria is classified into seven main agroecological zones which include Humid Forest, Derived Savannah, Southern Guinea Savannah, Northern Guinea Savannah, Sudan Savannah, Sahel Savannah, ... The Sudan Savannah zone is found in the Northwest stretching from the Sokoto plains in the West, through the Northern sections of the Central highland. The Guinea Savannah, with its typically short trees and tall grasses, is the most luxuriant of the Savannah vegetation belts in Nigeria. Each zone has a distinct combination of climate, soil, and geography, which influences the types of crops and farming practices appropriate for the region. The zone is characterized by a low average annual temperature (21.5°C). These zones are: Mangrove Swamp and Coastal Vegetation: Situated along the Atlantic coastline. This zone, therefore, is very important in terms of food production and timber for construction and cabinet making[i]. The better-drained areas support Oil Palm trees (Elaeis guineensis) and big trees like Iroko (Chlorophora excelsa). During the rainy season, the whole zone is green and covered with tall grasses that grow and reach maturity rapidly and thus become fibrous and tough. Nigeria’s ecological zones are vulnerable to climate change impacts like increased temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events, which can lead to desertification, coastal erosion, and loss of biodiversity. The Nigerian lowland forests, found in the southwest and southeast, are a prime example of this zone. 9. 3. The soil in the mangrove area is poorly aerated with waterlogged mud and is high in salt content due to the constant flooding by the sea. Fishing and fiber-making are the important products of the fresh-water swamp communities. The average annual rainfall and temperature are 1314mm and 26.5°C respectively. Yes, Nigeria has several protected areas, such as national parks and forest reserves, which are crucial for conserving the nation’s ecological zones and the biodiversity within them. It highlights the importance of preserving these unique areas for future generations. Occupies about 18 130 km2 of the extreme Northeast corner of Nigeria and is the last vegetation zone in the extreme northern part of the country, close to Lake Chad, where the dry season lasts for up to 9 months and the total average annual rainfall is hardly up to 700mm. [i] Oyenuga, V.A. (1967). Sudan Savanna Moving further north, the Sudan savanna marks a significant shift towards drier conditions. Yes, the Sahel savanna is the northernmost ecological zone in Nigeria, characterized by arid conditions and sparse vegetation. Important among the vegetation of this zone are the various Palm and Fibre plants such as Raphia spp., Raphia vinifera, the Wine Palm, and Raphia hookeri, the Roof-mat Palm. A large portion of this zone falls within the Tsetse Fly free belt of West Africa and it is excellent for the rearing and breeding of ruminant Livestock (Cattle, Goats, Sheep, Donkeys, Horses, and Camels). This comprehensive overview of Nigeria’s ecological zones, along with the detailed FAQs, provides a robust foundation for understanding the country’s diverse environmental landscape. Nigeria’s ecological zones transition in a clear south-north direction from the wet, mangrove swamps and rainforest near the coast to the drier savanna zones in the north. The Guinea Savannah, located in the middle of the country, is the most extensive ecological zone in Nigeria, covering near half of the country. The derived savanna is largely a result of human activities such as deforestation and agriculture. The natural vegetative zones resulted from the interaction of climate, humidity, rainfall, and soils. Different ecological zones are more suitable for certain crops based on the soil and climatic conditions. However, due to human activities, this one-time highly forested area has been drastically reduced. The zone is characterized by low rainfall and a long dry period, which calls for alternative water supply (irrigation) to enhance the full utilization of the zone’s potential in agricultural production. How many major biomes are there in Nigeria? The vegetation is not as dense as in the rainforest, and grasses are more prominent. 14. 2. 6. 8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Nigeria’s Ecological Zones Here are 15 frequently asked questions, designed to provide more in-depth information and enhance understanding of the ecological zones of Nigeria: 1. What is the climate like in the rainforest zone of Nigeria? Does Nigeria have special economic zones related to its ecological diversity? Human activities like deforestation, agriculture, and urbanization significantly impact Nigeria’s ecological zones. Here the vegetation is not only sparse but the grasses are very short. The Five Ecological Zones in Detail Mangrove Swamp and Coastal Vegetation This zone is characterized by mangrove forests and other coastal plant life adapted to the saltwater environment. This area is located in the far north and is typically drier, with shorter grasses. Map showing the Sudan Savanna region of Nigeria Courtesy: Ojo Tolulope Samuel The low average annual rainfall of 657.3mm and the prolonged dry season (6-9 months)[ii] sustain fewer trees and shorter grasses than the Guinea Savannah. What are the major crops that thrive in Nigeria’s various zones? How does the Sudan savanna differ from the Guinea savanna? It is a low-lying region, with hardly any part rising over 30m above sea level, thus, it facilitates the development of freshwater swamps along the Niger Delta, drowned estuaries, lagoons, and creeks. These factors have been modified by human activities and man’s pattern of land use. 12. Nigeria, a land of vibrant cultures and varied landscapes, boasts a remarkable range of ecological zones. This area lies immediately inland of the mangrove swamp but on slightly higher ground. Also found in the zone are Locust Bean trees (Parkia filicoidea), Tamarind tree (Tamarindus indica), and Mango (Mangifera indica). The Lake Chad basin, with its seasonally flooded undulating plains, supports a few tall trees. The Northern part of the country representing about 80% of the vegetative zones experiences lower rainfall and shorter rainy season and they make up the Savannah land. The vegetation is dominated by mangrove trees, with specialized root systems that can tolerate the salty conditions and low oxygen levels of the waterlogged soil. The Guinea savanna’s location in the central part of the country, with its balance of wet and dry seasons, allows it to support a wide range of vegetation and has historically been suitable for both agriculture and grazing. Many states in the north and central regions have large areas within the savanna zones. It also serves as a nursery for marine life and is home to unique flora adapted to high salinity conditions. Let’s delve deeper into each of these zones and explore their unique features. It is often a result of deforestation and agricultural practices, where the original forest cover has been cleared and is now being replaced by savanna species. The increasing aridity in the area accounts for the progressive drying up of the Lake Chad. The country has six distinct agro-ecological zones transiting in south-north direction from the Atlantic coast to the arid savanna of Sahel. The Guinea savanna provides grazing lands for livestock and is an important area for agriculture. The lagoons or the rivers that overflow their banks in the wet season supply it with fresh water because the area is low lying, therefore it is flooded with rainwater and lies under the rain for sometimes, eight or nine months of the year. It is by far the most densely human-populated zone of Northern Nigeria. It represents a transitional zone where rainforest has been degraded into a more savanna-like environment. Are there any protected areas in Nigeria to conserve ecological zones? Which states in Nigeria are located in the savanna zone? This area is defined by its high rainfall, high temperatures, and dense, evergreen vegetation. What are the vulnerabilities of Nigeria’s ecological zones to climate change? The people found in this zone are the nomadic herdsmen, and they are careful not to burn the grass found because sparse as it is it provides the only pasture available for their grazing livestock. Derived Savanna The derived savanna is a transitional zone, often created by human activity, where the rainforest gradually gives way to savanna-like vegetation. Of all the zones it contains the most valuable species of vegetation.

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