

## PART

# 3

## METABOLISM AND NUTRITION

The three basic requirements of animals are food, cover, and space. This idea has been repeated many times in courses in wildlife ecology and management. The requirements for food have frequently been discussed at a level confined to food habits, the average amount required per animal per day, and other similar considerations. Each animal, however, ingests food, digests it, and uses it metabolically to meet its current needs. These needs change, depending on the activity and productivity of each animal. Thus the need for food is based on dynamic biological processes ranging from biochemical reactions at the molecular level to forage production on different ranges at the community or ecosystem level. An understanding of the basic biological processes helps in an evaluation of the importance of different components in the total picture of nutritive ecology.