Wildlife habitats are areas with the combination of necessary resources—water, food and shelter—and environmental conditions that allow a given species to survive and reproduce. Vegetation plays the key role in providing these basic biological needs. Major vegetation types, such as forests, shrublands, grasslands and wetlands, typically attract wildlife species uniquely adapted to survive in each of those particular environments. Other resident species may thrive in a range of habitat types. The plant and animal species that each of these major vegetation types support are the measure of its biological diversity; biological diversity is a critical element in maintaining viable ecosystems. This map defines 27 general habitat types, with local conditions within each providing a range of environments. The vegetation maps on pages 178–185 show more specifically defined vegetation groupings; this map illustrates the degree of interpenetration of different habitat types.