Calico Pennant
Calico Pennant (*Celithemis elisa*) – 1.3”, 29-34 mm

**Flight Record:**
(5/11-9/23)
Peaks June-July.

**Fairly Common**

**Habitat:**
Shallow, sunny ponds/pools w/ marshy borders, vegetated w/ grasses, sedges.

**First Glance:**
Small, bright red to yellow, lots of hovering. Perches often on grass/sedge tips along waters edge & nearby fields.

**Compare:**
Halloween Pennant

**Hind wing marks** unlike any other N. VA species

Female and Juv Male: same marks, but different colors from mature male
Notes from the field – Calico Pennant:
A beautifully colored dragonfly, the Calico Pennant is one of only two species in our area that wears the color pink (Carolina Saddlebags being the other). Combined with bright orange or lemon yellow triangles on their abdomens, a close-up look at this species can change your day.

Every time I’ve seen one, it starts with a flash of red-orange hovering over a meadow or pond edge, then vanishing to reappear many feet away as another hovering gleam of scarlet. They also love to perch on stem tips, often facing away from the water as they wait for approaching females. I’m always surprised at how small they are (about Blue Dasher size) and despite their color, they’re easy to miss. Look for them in shallow, grassy pools in full sun during June and July, and in nearby meadows, often many yards from water.

One morning as I explored the sedge and grass-filled shallows of a sunlit pond at Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, I was lucky enough to stumble upon the emergence of several dozen Calico Pennants. Newly emerged dragonflies, like this female (lower right), are called tenerals during this brief and vulnerable period before their wings have dried and filled with blood. Tenerals are fragile, can barely fly, have cellophane-like wings and are often captured by predators.