

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



M

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



Juv M



F



**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 *teneralis* during this brief and vulnerable period before their wings have dried and filled with blood. Teneralis are fragile, can barely fly, have cellophane-like wings and are often captured by predators.

