

# 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



### 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.

