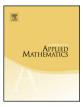


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# Using functional equations to enumerate 1324-avoiding permutations

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#### A R T I C L E I N F O

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#### ABSTRACT

We consider the problem of enumerating permutations with exactly r occurrences of the pattern 1324 and derive functional equations for this general case as well as for the pattern avoidance (r = 0) case. The functional equations lead to a new algorithm for enumerating length n permutations that avoid 1324. This approach is used to enumerate the 1324-avoiders up to n = 31. We also extend those functional equations to account for the number of inversions and derive analogous algorithms.

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#### 1. Introduction

Let  $a_1 \ldots a_k$  be a sequence of k distinct positive integers. We define the *reduction* of this sequence, denoted by  $\operatorname{red}(a_1 \ldots a_k)$ , to be the length k permutation  $\tau = \tau_1 \ldots \tau_k$  that is order-isomorphic to  $a_1 \ldots a_k$  (i.e.,  $a_i < a_j$  if and only if  $\tau_i < \tau_j$  for every i and j). Given a (permutation) pattern  $\tau \in S_k$ , we say that a permutation  $\pi = \pi_1 \ldots \pi_n$  contains the pattern  $\tau$  if there exists  $1 \leq i_i < i_2 < \cdots < i_k \leq n$  such that  $\operatorname{red}(\pi_{i_1}\pi_{i_2}\ldots\pi_{i_k}) = \tau$ , in which case we call  $\pi_{i_1}\pi_{i_2}\ldots\pi_{i_k}$  an occurrence of  $\tau$ . We also define  $N_{\tau}(\pi)$  to be the number

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of occurrences of pattern  $\tau$  in the permutation  $\pi$ . For example, if the pattern  $\tau = 123$ , the permutation 53412 avoids the pattern  $\tau$  (so  $N_{123}(53412) = 0$ ), whereas the permutation 52134 contains two occurrences of  $\tau$  (so  $N_{123}(52134) = 2$ ).

For a pattern  $\tau$  and non-negative integer  $r \ge 0$ , we define the set

$$\mathcal{S}_n(\tau, r) := \{ \pi \in \mathcal{S}_n : \pi \text{ has exactly } r \text{ occurrences of the pattern } \tau \}$$

and also define  $s_n(\tau, r) := |S_n(\tau, r)|$ . For the r = 0 case, we say that the two patterns  $\sigma$ and  $\tau$  are *Wilf-equivalent* if  $s_n(\sigma, 0) = s_n(\tau, 0)$  for all n. Additionally, two patterns that are Wilf-equivalent are said to belong to the same *Wilf-equivalence class*. Note that the r = 0 case corresponds with "classical" pattern avoidance, which has been well-studied. Work on the more general problem  $(r \ge 0)$  has usually been restricted to patterns of length 3 and small r.

A little more is known for the pattern avoidance problem, but the problem quickly gets difficult. For each  $\tau \in S_3$ , it is well known that  $s_n(\tau, 0) = \frac{1}{n+1} \binom{2n}{n}$  (the Catalan numbers) [8]. For the length 4 patterns, there are three cases (Wilf-equivalence classes) to consider: 1234, 1342, and 1324. The enumeration for the 1234-avoiding permutations was solved by Gessel in [7]. Later, Bóna solved the case for the 1342-avoiding permutations in [3]. The pattern 1324, however, has been notoriously difficult to enumerate.

There is currently no non-recursive formula known for computing  $s_n(1324, 0)$ , and precise asymptotics are not known either. Marinov and Radoičić developed an approach in [10] using generating trees and computed  $s_n(1324, 0)$  for  $n \leq 20$ . Another approach (using insertion encoding) was used by Albert et al. in [1] to compute  $s_n(1324, 0)$  for  $n \leq 25$ (five more terms). Given the difficulty of this pattern, Zeilberger has even conjectured that "Not even God knows  $s_{1000}(1324, 0)$ " [6].

Given the difficulty of exact enumeration, work has also been done on studying how the sequence  $s_n(\tau, 0)$  grows for various patterns. We define the *Stanley–Wilf limit* of a pattern  $\tau$  to be:

$$L(\tau) := \lim_{n \to \infty} \left( s_n(\tau, 0) \right)^{1/n}.$$
 (1)

Thanks to results by Arratia [2] and Marcus and Tardos [9], we know that for each pattern  $\tau$ , the limit  $L(\tau)$  exists and is finite. For patterns of length three, the Stanley–Wilf limit is known to be 4. Additionally, Regev [13] showed that L(1234) = 9, while Bóna's result in [3] gives us L(1342) = 8. The exact limit for the pattern 1324, however, is still unknown. The best known lower bound is by Albert et al. [1], who showed that  $L(1324) \ge 9.47$ . The best known upper bound has seen some improvements in recent years. The recent "best" upper bound was improved by Claesson, Jelínek, and Steingrímsson in [5] to  $L(1324) \le 16$ . That approach was then refined by Bóna in [4] to show that  $L(1324) < (7 + 4\sqrt{3}) \approx 13.93$ .

Additionally, Claesson, Jelínek, and Steingrímsson conjectured that the number of length n permutations avoiding 1324 with exactly k inversions was non-decreasing in n

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