

The conjecture in A284597 follows from Dickson's conjecture

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Theorem 1 *Assume Dickson's conjecture. For every positive integer n there are infinitely many runs of exactly n consecutive natural numbers with nondecreasing tau values, where τ is the number of divisors function A000005.*

Proof The proof is by induction.

For the case $n = 1$, we want to find arbitrarily large x such that $\tau(x - 1) > \tau(x) > \tau(x + 1)$. Start with y such that $\tau(y) > \tau(y + 1)$ (e.g. this will be the case if $y + 1$ is prime and y is composite). If y is not an example, $\tau(y - 1) \leq \tau(y)$. Consider $x = y + ky(y + 1)$ for integer $k > 1$. If $1 + ky$ is prime, we have $x + 1 = (y + 1)(1 + ky)$; $y + 1$ and $1 + ky$ are coprime, so $\tau(x + 1) = \tau(y + 1)\tau(1 + ky) = 2\tau(y + 1)$. Similarly if $1 + k(y + 1)$ is prime, we have $x = y(1 + k(y + 1))$ so $\tau(x) = 2\tau(y)$. On the other hand, let q be a prime that doesn't divide $y(y + 1)$ and N large enough that $N > 2\tau(y)$. There is v such that $y - 1 + vy(y + 1) \equiv 0 \pmod{q^N}$. Thus if $k \equiv v \pmod{q^N}$, $q^N \mid x - 1$ and $\tau(x - 1) \geq N + 1 > \tau(x) > \tau(x + 1)$. There is no congruence condition preventing $1 + ky$ and $1 + k(y + 1)$ being prime with $k \equiv v \pmod{q^N}$, since for any finite set of primes $p_j \neq q$, there are k with $k \equiv v \pmod{q^N}$ and $k \equiv 0 \pmod{p_i}$, so that $1 + ky \equiv 1 \pmod{p_j}$ and $1 + k(y + 1) \equiv 1 \pmod{p_j}$, while $x - 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{q^N}$ implies $1 + k(y + 1) = xy^{-1}$ and $1 + ky = x(y + 1)^{-1}$ are nonzero mod q . Thus Dickson's conjecture implies there are infinitely many k for which this is true.

Now for the induction step. Suppose y is the start of a run of exactly n consecutive natural numbers with nondecreasing τ values, i.e.

$$\tau(y - 1) > \tau(y) \leq \tau(y + 1) \leq \dots \leq \tau(y + n - 1) > \tau(y + n)$$

Let $L = \text{lcm}(y - 1, y, \dots, y + n - 1, y + n + 1)$, and consider $x = y + kL$ for $k > 1$. If $1 + kL/(y + i)$ is prime (where $i \in \{-1, 0, \dots, n - 1, n + 1\}$), then $x + i = (y + i)(1 + kL/(y + i))$ with $y + i$ and $1 + kL/(y + i)$ coprime so $\tau(x + i) = 2\tau(y + i)$. On the other hand, let $q > n$ be a prime that doesn't divide $(y - 1)y \dots (y + n - 1)(y + n + 1)$, and N large enough that $N + 1 > \max(2\tau(y + n - 1), 2\tau(y + n + 1))$. There is v such that $y + n + vL \equiv 0 \pmod{q^N}$. If $k \equiv v \pmod{q^N}$, $q^N \mid x + n$ and $\tau(x + n) \geq N + 1$. Thus if $k \equiv v \pmod{q^N}$ and $1 + kL/(y + i)$ is prime for all $i \in \{-1, 1, \dots, n - 1, n + 1\}$, then

$$\tau(x - 1) > \tau(x) \leq \tau(x + 1) \leq \dots \tau(x + n - 1) < \tau(x + n) > \tau(x + n + 1)$$

so x is the start of a run of exactly $n + 1$ consecutive natural numbers with nondecreasing τ values. There is no congruence condition preventing this, since for any set of primes $p_j \neq q$, there are k with $k \equiv v \pmod{q^N}$ and $k \equiv 0 \pmod{p_j}$, so $1 + kL/(y + i) \equiv 1 \pmod{p_j}$ for $i \in \{-1, 0, \dots, n - 1, n + 1\}$, while $1 + kL/(y + i) = (x + i)(y + i)^{-1}$ are nonzero mod q . Thus Dickson's conjecture implies there are infinitely many k for which this is true.

This completes the proof.